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THE
CONFORMITY
OF THE
Discipline and Government
Of those who are commonly called
INDEPENDANTS
To that of the
ANCIENT PRIMITIVE
CHRISTIANS.

By Dr. *Lewis Du Moulin* sometime History
Professor of Oxford.

*Qui reperta veritate aliquid ulterius discutit, mendacium
quirit.*

Valentinianus & Martianus.

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Dr. Mouton

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CONFORMITY

Principles of Government

INDEPENDENT

CHRISTIANS

By Dr. Mouton

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THE
CONFORMITY
OF THE
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Of those who are commonly called
INDEPENDANTS,
With that of the
ANCIENT PRIMITIVE
CHRISTIANS

CHAP. I.

Of prejudices in General, and of the force of the Objections commonly urged against the Tenets and Principles of Nestorius, to serve by way of Introduction, to the prejudices that are formed against the Independants.

TIS above fifty years, since some learned and judicious Persons, as well of the Gown, as others, have new brought to light an important and necessary truth, which the strength of prejudice, and a General and Opinionative blindness, that hath lasted for more than this thousand years, hath kept under a Bushel: 'Tis that of *Nestorius*, which the eminent Authority of *Cyril*, has made to pass, during all that time, and even from the third Oecumenical Council, for an absolute lie, and

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with which all the learned, both the general and particular Councils, all the Fathers, and all the new Doctors of both Communions, have been so successively prepossessed, that they have thought it nearly concerned their honour, not only to deny it; but even to be continually throwing their *Anathema's* at the head of the poor *Nestorius*, whom they have made to pass for an abominable Heretick, although at the bottome, *Nestorius* was he of the two who was by far the more Orthodox, and the honestest man; and on the other hand, *Cyril* was the Heretick. For it is with the Authority of *Cyrillus*, as with that eminent Authority of the Church of Rome, to which *Monsieur Arnauld* would have all men fixed, and with which he thought to overwhelm and undo *Monsieur Claude*.

NOT to make any Application of this History to what has happened to my self in particular, as to the necessary truths I have promulged and advanced, I will content my self with fixing to one, which is like to that of *Nestorius*; 'tis that about those who are called Independants; who though they will not yield, in exactness of living, or in holiness of Doctrine, to any of the Protestants in Europe, for they are led more than other Christians by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is a Spirit of meekness, moderation, and of a sound mind, and they are farthest off from the spirit of malignity and Persecution, and their Doctrine hath more of conformity with that of the Apostles, and the Primitive Christians, than any of the others; and though, to conclude, their confession of Faith is the most Nervous and sinewy, the most Orthodox, and couched up in terms so strong and powerful, that of all pieces, which yet have appeared in the World, since the Writings of the Apostles, it is the most full and perfect: Yet have they had the unhappiness to be loaded with injuries by our Synods, and by those of our Divines, who are the most eminent in learning, and of a life and piety the most exemplary, and that too in a manner altogether inhumane and barbarous; so far, as that *Monsieur Amyrauld* calls them Fools, Enthusiasts, and such as are infamous in their lives. *Monsieur D' Aille*, the Father says of them, that it is a pernicious Sect, which from the very foundation overthrows the Empires and Governments of the World; and others have no better opinion of them, imputing to them practices contrary to truth; as to receive into their Communion the most loose, disordered, and impious persons; though on the contrary, their fault, if it be one, is just at the other extremity, not to receive, neither in-

to their Society, nor their Communion any but such, in whom they probably find the marks of regeneration; and that beside, their greatest Crime is to condemn the practise of Churches, as Popish and Tyrannical, when by a right pretended to be divine, and by vertue of the power of the Keyes, and of that of binding and loosing; they erect a Tribunal, or a National Ecclesiastical power, independent and distinct from that of the Magistrate, though otherwise they approve of the Government of our Churches of France according to the principles of those who establish it upon a natural right, and upon a considerate discipline, in a manner absolutely like to the civil and politick. For it is upon this ground of natural right, of confederation, of Arbitrary Discipline, and purely humane, which may, and ought to be changed and altered, according to times and places, it is upon this ground, I say, that the Discipline of the Reformed Churches of France is established and founded, as the last Article of their Discipline, says it, in the very express terms.

CHAP. II.

The Advantage of the Congregational way, above any other establishment of the Church beside: That it is the most reasonable, and that all others have insuperable inconveniencies.

THIS Congregational way hath incredible advantages over and above all the other establishments of Religion, which most commonly are of the same extent as the civil State of every Territory: but, beyond all, this way introduces into all the Churches which conform to it, or at least into a great many of those Churches, a Reformation in Doctrine, in Discipline, and in manner of Government; wholly Apostolical: it being impossible that of a hundred Congregations, or particular Churches, which should differ one from another in Faith, and in the way of Government, otherwise Independent each on the other, or on the Synods, but that there should be some or other which does retain this Apostolical holiness: whereas it is not any wayes possible, as we have seen by experience since the time of Constantine the Great, but that one national Church of the same extent as the civil State, or as the Empire or Dominion of a Prince,

must needs have many defects, errours, and apparent disorders, not only in Discipline, but also in Doctrine, for these following Reasons,

1. We must consider a National Church, either in the manner, as it was established by *Constantine*, *Theodosius*, and *Justinian*, of as great an extent as the Roman Empire, in which the State Ecclesiastical was regulated after the Model of the Civil State : where the Bishop of a City or place, whose extent was called *pagus*, was parallel to the *Defensor Civitatis*, or to the *Dux*; The Archbishop, or the Metropolitan of a Province was parallel to the *Præses* or *Proconsul*, and *Corrætor*. The Diocesan, the Primate, or the Patriarch, who was also the Hexarch in the time of the Calcedonian Council, was parallel to the Legat of the Emperour, or *Vicarius*, where the *Prætorium* was, and where there was in the Ecclesiastical State a subordination of Courts and Tribunals, as in the Civil State: for that was the Error of the Antients to adjust the Ecclesiastical Government to the Civil, instead of practising the quite contrary, according to the judicious maxim of a wise *Italian* Politician. *Bisogna accomodare la ragione di Stato alla Religione, & non la Religione alla ragione di Stato.*

Or we must consider the National Church, when the Pastors are in an equality of rank and dignity, but with subordination to Provincial or National Assemblies, Consistories, Colloquies, and Synods. Now in either manner of establishment, where there is observed in all things an uniformity of Doctrine and of Discipline, and which is pressed by the same rigorous severities in the State Ecclesiastical, as the Laws are in the Civil, in either manner, I say, even, when the Magistrate favours the true Worshippers of Jesus Christ, there happens Errours and disorders innumerable, which never would be found in the establishment of the Congregational way: as when the Bishop or a small number of Pastors has the whole management and supervision of affairs; and where it is impossible but that Heresie, Ambition, Envy, Polltick regards, temporal interest, the Spirit of Pride and Grandeur, and Factions should reign among them; and that these Errours and disorders should so easily be visible, and taken notice of, as in a particular composed of one or two Pastors, and of a small number of People, This is what has been observed by the Historians *Socrates*, and *Sozomen*, and by the Fathers. *Gregory Nazianzen* sayes, that he had never seen Synods to produce any good effects, but that they had rather increased Heresie, then
stified.

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stified and suppress'd it. *Martyn*, the Bishop of *Tours*, had no better opinion of them. All the Synods, especially, the Oecumenical, had been Shire-halls, houses of confusion, or even *Aeldama's*, if the Emperours, or their Commissaries had not thrown water upon the fire which they had kindled: Yet they could not always so hinder, but that these two great evils of Synods and Bishops, the *synagoga*, and the *synagoga*, did transport them to the very extremities of tyranny and cruelty: insomuch that *Dioscorus* who was President in the second Council of *Ephesus* over four hundred persons, was so moved with rage and passion against *Flavian* Bishop of *Antioch*, that he rose up from his seat, and killed him with blows and kicks, and also trampled upon his body after he was dead. 'Tis remarkable that the Canons full of piety and pure Doctrine, were never made in Numerous and Oecumenical Synods, but in those that were private, and composed of a few persons, such as was that of *Orenge*, where we read these words that deserve to be writ in Gold. *Tales nos amat Deus, quales futuri sumus ipsius dono, non quales sumus nostro merito*: having in it only the first *Nicene* Council which hath produced us this most Nervous confession concerning the blessed Trinity.

I add that in the Establishment of a National Church, which observes in a large extent of Dominion the same uniformity of Religion as of Policy, it is neither goodness nor truth, neither sincerity, nor a well-form'd design that acts, but it is hazard, worldly interest, power, and the greatest number, which is oftentimes the most erroneous, and the will of one single Person invested with an absolute power, which is most commonly taken up by Flatterers, and Counsellors, who are animated with other motives than those of Conscience, or who, how good soever, and sincere otherwise, are not illuminated, nor learned enough to give a right judgement about matters of Religion. *Carneades* said, that the State of *Athens* was unhappy, in which wise men made fair Overtures, and gave good Counsels, but Fools judg'd of them, and order'd all things according to their idle and extravagant fancies. And indeed Wise men may consult, but it is the greatest number, or the longest and best sword that determines, which is too often in the hands of those, who have more strength of power, than force of judgement, so that by this establishment of a National Ecclesiastical Government, thousands of Christians and faithful Souls are as much obliged to submit themselves to

the Religion of a whole Empire, according to the establishment which shall be made of it by an Idolatrous *Rehoboam*, by an *Arrian Constantius*, by an Apostate *Julian*, by a Popish *Mary Queen of England*, as to that which shall be set up by a *David*, by a *Constantine* the Great, and by a *Queen Elizabeth* of ever blessed memory; which Inconveniencies neither can nor ever will be able to happen in a place, where the Congregational way shall be established. It may be one Sovereign, who shall be as Heretick, as *Constantius*, will issue forth his commands for the establishment of his heresie in all the places of his dominion, as *Theodosius* the second made another for that of the Orthodox Faith, when he commanded, that all the Subjects of his Empire should receive the faith from *Damasius* of *Rome*, and from *Peter* of *Alexandria*. But it may likewise fall out, that that same Emperour, to wit, *Theodosius* the second, might make two Ordinances, which may mutually destroy one another; for he convoked the first Synod of *Ephesus*, which condemned the Opinion of *Nestorius*, and some years after he convoked the second Synod of *Ephesus*, which contradicted it, and allowed the opinion of *Nestorius*.

2. THIS same inconvenience is verified by the establishment of the best reformed Churches in the World, I mean that of *Luther*, and of *Calvin*. For as the Reformation was that of a National Church of the same extent with that of the Territory of the Sovereign where it was established; so likewise did it carry the Obligation into *Germany*, *Swedenland*, and *Denmark*, that they should submit to *Consubstantiation*, without any bodies having the liberty to form assemblies to themselves which may reject it; which Churches might do if they were Independent. The same inconvenience is happened, and must happen from the National establishment of the Reformation which *Calvin* hath made in *England*, *Holland*, some parts of *Germany*, and elsewhere: and how pure soever the Reformation was as for the Doctrine of that holy man, it is extremely defective as to the Discipline, the power Ecclesiastick, and that Tribunal which he Erected in *Geneva*, distinct and Independent on the Magistrature, by virtue of a pretended Divine right and power, which hath been the cause of all those infinite disorders, confusions, and even Schisms in *England*, *Scotland*, *Holland*, and *Geneva*, even in the time of *Calvin*, as we read in his Epistles.

3. ONE great convenience which is found in the Establishment of a National Government, is, that it is always grounded upon humane

mane principles, cruel, and barbarous, as to constrain, to persecute, and even to burn those who in matter of Religion do not embrace that of the Ecclesiastical State, or of the Magistrate that establishes it, and do not conform to all the practices that he appoints and commands.

4. **THEY** say that this National establishment of Ecclesiastical Government, deprives Man of his Reason, and his natural and Religious liberty, in the choice he ought to make of his God, and of the worship he ought to render him, and to which he should not be constrained, but persuaded; neither to be brought to it by custome nor by birth, nor likewise by the Law of the Magistrate, unless he be convinced that his Ordinances and commands in matters of Religion are conformable to the word of God; for they press mightily upon this consideration, that this establishment diverts Man of the same liberty in his religious life, as he hath in the Civil, where he is not restrained by any Law of the Magistrate to choose his house, his Wife, his Master, his Servant, his Lawyer, his Physician, his Calling, nor any one particular manner how to govern his Family, provided it may be done without breaking the publick peace.

5. **THEY** say, that how unjust or how extravagant soever the Laws of the Magistrate might be for the regulating of Politie, yet there is nothing unreasonable, neither in the Magistrate generally to command the practice of them, nor in all Subjects submitting to them, without reserve or exception, so long as the importance of those Laws do not extend beyond the present life; but if it reaches further, and Conscience and Eternal Salvation be concerned therein, they believe, that an uniformity of Faith and of Religion, which should be imposed upon us, how good so ever the thing might be in its self, it would be wicked and unreasonable, because it would do violence to the Conscience, of which the Magistrate is not the Master, nor the Arbitrer, as he is of the Bodies and estates of Men.

CHAP. III.

That upon the ground of this Hypothesis, That every Supream Authority, either in the Popish or the Presbyterian Church, is subject to Error; Monsieur de Condom hath reason to approve of the Congregational way, and the Independency of particular Churches on any other Authority than that of Jesus Christ in his Word.

BUT there is nothing, which does more reasonably establish the Independency of particular Churches, nor which more powerfully destroys this Authority in the Church, by a divine right, and the necessity there is, that a person, or a particular Church should depend upon its Ordinances, (unless that Supream Authority is infallible; for if it be subject to Error, it must of necessity do violence to the Christian liberty of the faithful, and so degenerate into a Tyrannical Authority) there is nothing, I say, which establishes more reasonably the Independency of particular Churches, nor which more powerfully destroys their dependency, than the account which the Bishop of Condom gives of the judgements of the Independants, and of the Sentence that the Synod of Charenton pronounced against them.

THEY believe, says he, that every faithful Member ought to follow the illuminations of his own Conscience, without submitting his judgement to the Authority of any Body, nor any Ecclesiastical Assembly, and they do not refuse to submit to the word of God, nor to embrace the decisions of Synods, when after a due and through Examination of them, they find them reasonable. That which they refuse to do, is to submit their judgement to that of any Assembly, because it is a Society of Men that are subject to Error.

THE Gospel it self is not more true than this perswasion of Independants, and that Bishop could not approve of one more reasonable, to wit, that a particular person, or Church, ought not to submit their Faith, their Religion, nor the guidance of their manners to an Authority which is subject to error, but only to the Word

Word of God, which is an infallible Authority. Upon this ground the Bishop of Condom hath reason to condemn the Synod of Charenton, for having taxed the Judgement of the Independants with Error, which consists, as says the Synod, in what they teach, that every Church ought to be governed by its own laws, without any dependance upon any in matters Ecclesiastical, and without any obligation to acknowledge the authority of Synods for its governance and conduct.

THE N a little after, this same Synod decides, that this Sect is as prejudicial to the State as to the Church: that it opens a door to all sorts of Irregularities, and extravagancies: that it takes away all the means of bringing any remedy to them; and that if it had field-room enough it would form to it self as many Religions, as Parishes or particular Assemblies.

THE SE last words, says the Bishop, discover, that it is principally in matters of Faith, that the Synod would establish dependancy, since the greatest inconvenience that he takes notice of, in to which the faithful people of God would fall by independancy, is, that they would frame as many Religions as Parishes; then, says he, of necessity, according to the Doctrine of that Synod, each Church, and by a stronger reason each particular, must depend, as to what respects faith, upon a supreme Authority, which resides in some Assembly, or in some body, to which Authority all the faithful people of God ought to submit their Judgement.

THIS Bishop could take notice of nothing more unreasonable, and more extravagant in our Synods, than to oblige a private person to submit himself in matters of Faith to the Judgment of an Assembly, whose decisions are not the Word of God, that is to say, not infallible.

THIS true, that pre-supposing all Supreme Authority in the Church, whether in the Protestant or Romish, is subject to error, the Government of the Adversaries of Rome, of Independants, or other Protestants, is equally justifiable, when they refuse to pay submission to the Authority of Rome, since that it is incomparably more defective than that which the Protestants set up in their Churches.

BUT on the other side, if it be true, that, upon this ground, the Government of the Independants is more justifiable and more reasonable than that of other Protestants who blindly submit themselves to a Tribunal subject to error, and whose conduct and governance is beyond all comparison further off from Reason, than is that of the Papists; for pre-supposing that the Authority of Rome is infallible, the submission which the people pay to that su-

preme Authority, is so much the more reasonable as that of the Protestants is the less, when they submit to a supreme Authority which they themselves believe is subject to error.

IN short, the Bishop of Condom hath great reason to be sure, that the Protestants are mightily beside the Cushion, and to blame, for condemning the Infallibility of Rome, so long as the Incontestability, and indisputableness which they invest their supreme Authority withal, carries the same Obligation along with it to obedience and submission. A great Divine of ours who relates the Judgement of the Protestants hereupon, *libr. i. cap. 8. de Clavibus*, expresses himself in these words. *Hujus ligamenti quo Pastores Ecclesie constringunt peccatores, tanta est vis & certitudo, ut Christus pronunciet, si quid ligaverint pastores in terris, id fore ligatum in caelo; id est, Deum Ratum habiturum hanc ligationem, potest fieri aliquando ut ligatio sit injusta, vult tamen Christus eam ratam esse, non enim fas est homini qui injuste excommunicatus est, invadere sacram Cenam, & invitis Pastoribus irrumpere in communionem Ecclesiae.*

IS not that to tell us, that a man excommunicated unjustly, is as much obliged to submit himself to the excommunication pronounced against him by an Authority which hath erred, as when it is given by an Authority which hath not erred? And is not that to tell us, that in every way, whither justly or unjustly, a person delivered to Satan (as is the general opinion of all Protestants (excepting my Father) that to deliver to Satan and to excommunicate are one and the same thing) ought not to dispute or resist that Authority, which hath delivered him up to that evil Spirit? To conclude, is not that to speak in the Language of the Canon, *Si papa diffinit. 40.* which will by no means permit a person cast thus to the Devil, although against all right and justice, by the Authority of the Pope, to resist that supreme Authority.

THE Bishop likewise hath no less good Reason to be sure, that the conjunction of all the parts of Romish Church in one body would be unreasonable, if they were not cemented by infallibility; and to divest it of its Infallibility, is to break it in pieces, is to cast every of its least parts into Independancy, and to give liberty to every of them to govern themselves according to their own mode and way, and to do their business by themselves.

BUT here we should observe, as we go along, that of two depths of Satan, the Ecclesiastical Power, and Infallibility, the first is a Lie, an
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Imposture, and a cheat; but that presupposing that it is not a cheat, but a thing that is good, and true, and the use of which is necessary in the Church, Infallibility is naturally and reasonably a consequence of it. And in truth, our Reformers have placed Incontestability in the room of Infallibility. But it is true also, that if Infallibility be a pure cheat, the other is a pure and absolute tyranny, and it is less reasonable, in not being a natural consequence of Ecclesiastical power: incontestability is a thousand times worse than Infallibility except it be in one thing, and that is, that it hath not been of so long a Duration.

'TIS here no doubt wherein the illuminations of humane Reason were not so great to our first Reformers, as to the generation of men in this Age: For as those foresaw in it, that a submission of so many Princes and people, who differed in Customs, Laws, and Languages, to an Authority subject to error, was not only unreasonable, but also impossible, to prevent the revolt both of Kings and people, they with a great deal of Justice invested it with Infallibility.

AND 'tis here too that the Bishop of *Condom* triumphs over us, and has great reason for it on his side, when he reproaches us that we have been deficient in our Politicks, in not erecting among us an infallible Tribunal, and that we are much to blame, for obliging the faithful people of God with so much rigour and severity to submit to a tribunal subject to error; but those of *Rome* are not so, for they oblige their people to submit to one that is infallible.

BUT the Independants, as they are led by the illumination of grace, and reason, so likewise are they most rationally, and with great Justice and Piety disengaged not only from a pretended Infallible Tribunal, but also from the Tyranny of such dependance, or submission to an Authority subject to error.

AS to the Assertion of the Synod of *Charenton*, that the Sect of the Independants opens the door to all manner of Irregularities and Extravagances, that Assertion, I say, seems plausible at the first, as in truth it is not only plausible, but most reasonable in matters purely Civil, in which, if there were not a last Resort and Refuge, and Appeal from Court to Court in the Territories of a Sovereign, there would be as many Courts erected Independant one on the other, not only as there are Families, but as there are private persons. Which inconvenience is not one in matters of Religion, Faith, Doctrine and Divine Worship, in which the Conscience of every one is the last resort wherein the business is to be judged without any further Appeal, and where

none ought to be constrained, but exhorted and perswaded: A Synod is to perswade a particular Church to embrace such a Faith; but it hath neither right nor power to force it. Now a particular Church is to do the same as to one of its Members, and if it carries any constraint with it, it no longer acts as a Church, and as an Assembly of Christians and faithful people, but as a Magistrate, at least like an Arbitrator and Judge, to whom *Jesus Christ* sent the planteth in the eighteenth Chapter of *St. Matthew*, in these words. *tell it to the Church*, that is to say; tell it to an Assembly which had neither any Court, nor any power, nor Jurisdiction, and where the party intimated mightily decline, or refuse the Judgement without damage, as it appears by those words of *Jesus Christ*, *if he does not hearken to the Church*. For by these words, *let him be unto thee*, &c. *Jesus Christ* does not command the Church to proceed to an Excommunication of that party that has done the wrong, but he advises the offended party to cite the other, who has deprived himself of the quality of a Brother before the natural Judges, as well of the Publicans as of the Heathens, the one being the Ministers of the State, and the other being of the Religion of the *Emperour*. In short, the Church as such, and considered as Christians, and honest men, hath no more jurisdiction, than a Colledge of Philosophers.

CHAP. IV.

That the design of the Congregational Churches is most holy and most reasonable, when they labour to retain a Conformity of Faith with the other Reformed Churches, but take the liberty to differ from them in matter of Discipline: Of the veneration they have for Calvin, and for the Churches which follow his Doctrine and Discipline.

THE design of producing their Confession of Faith, is to shew, that it is the very Masterpiece of an extremely judicious Government; and as it was the work of persons most perfect in the Study of Divinity, the principal design they had in the composition of their Confession was to declare and testify to the World, that altho every Church might take the liberty to differ from others in discipline, they ought nevertheless to labour above all things to retain and keep the same

same faith in matters, that are essential with all the Reformed Churches. This is what the Congregational party have done with great care and circumspection in the making of their Confession: for beside, that they do but a very little differ from that of the Presbyterians, and that they do not at all divide from them, but in matter of Discipline, they have also indeavoured to have their Faith conformable to the Doctrine of the Church of England: and as to their Discipline, it is very simple and naked: they have no other than that which Saint Paul gives in three words, to wit, *That every thing in the Church should be done Decently and in Order.* They have especially had an eye to the practice of the Churches under the good Roman Emperors, under Constantine, Theodosius, Martianus, and Justinian, under whom they kept a strict uniformity in Faith, and that correspondence was maintained by letters which they called *Littere Testimentales, Circulares, Ecclesiasticae, Formatae*; tho otherwise they took the liberty to differ one from another, even under one and the same Emperour, in Discipline, in Customes, and in Ceremonies. Saint Austin, *Epist. ad Tannarium*, 119. & *Epist.* 86. *ad Casulanum Presbyterum*, permits any Church to differ from others in Ceremonies, and in manner of Government, provided that they agree with them in Unity of Faith. The Historian Socrates, *libr. 5. cap. 21.* tells us, that there was not to be found two Churches in all the Roman Empire, which observed one and the same form of Prayers to God. The Jesuit Mainbourg, how zealous soever he is to the Uniformity of Rome in his Doctrine and discipline, yet he ceases not to say, and to maintain, that the diversity of usages, customes, and practices, is compatible with the unity of Faith. *One ought not, says he, never to separate for the diversity and customes, which may be different the one from the other, without the wounding the Unity of Faith.* Pag. 303. of his third book of the *Treatise of Schism among the Grecians.* I have read as much in a great Lawyer, it is Godesfrey the Son. *Certissima olim fidei, conasseratio erat una Eucharistiam sumere. Quadoque dicebantur non in eadem disciplina, sed fide.*

WE must also do them this justice, that there are no Doctors who have a greater Veneration for the Doctrine and memory of Calvin, nor who desire with more ardent zeal to have a strict and close Communion with the Churches which follow the Doctrine of that holy man, than their Pastors; altho they believe that they may have, as I have said, the liberty to differ from them in matter of discipline, without thinking themselves guilty, either of separation, or schism.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

That the Congregational Churches do most rationally Establish the Authority of Synods and Pastors, and the nature of the Church:

TIS a great wrong and injury done to the Independants, to affirm that they condemn Synods, since on the contrary, they Establish the true use of them, as the Bishop of *Condom*, who hath more charity for them than other Synods, and our Divines acknowledge. *The Independants*, says he, *do not refuse to embrace and comply with the decisions of Synods, when, after they have duely examined them, they find them not unreasonable: that which they refuse to do, is to submit their Judgement to that of any Assembly or Society Subject to error.*

THE Independants argue as Mr. *Pajon* does: *Though Jesus Christ himself, says he, should come down from Heaven to dwell on the earth again with all the rays of Glory that are round about him, to teach us, and to guide and direct us; yet it would be impossible for us to obey him reasonably, without making use of our own illumination to know it, and to judge whether it be just and reasonable to obey him in all things.*

If he would not have a humane Judgement submit to that which discovers it's Infallibility with so much dazling and lustre, unless reason lead one to it; by an Argument *à fortiori* would he approve of the conduct of the Independants as reasonable, when they refuse to submit to a Judgement that is humane and fallible.

BUT the true Constitution of Synods according to them, when they look upon them as the Assemblies of the Ministers of Jesus Christ, of Divines, and of faithful people, and the true use they make of them, and which ought to be made of them, is to ask, and receive from them advice and counsel, as one expects, and as one ought to receive it from wise and experienced men, and not by way of command and impulse. That is all the Authority that the great Arch-Bishop of *Armagh*, and Mr. *Baxter* gives them, when they consider them as such: And also the Oecumenical Synods which were held under *Constantine* and *Martian*, had no more, before those Empe-

rouers

rouers gave to their conclusions the force and prevalence of Canons, and the Sanction of Imperial Laws.

THEY take the Apostolical Synod for the model of the Authority of all Synods, at least of that which they would attribute to themselves: and although it was the onley Synod that was guided by the spirit of Infallibility, and its Authority was much more eminent otherwise than that of all the Synodal Assemblies in the succeeding Ages; yet it never went, as the others have done since, to throw out *Anathema's* at the heads of those who refuse to be obedient to them; but it only concludes with this exhortation, *if you keep these Canons, you will do well*,

THEY speak of the nature of the Church, of the power and calling of Pastors, and of their Ordination, and according to the good maxims of *Monsieur Mestrezat*, *Monsieur Pajon*, and *Monsieur Claude*, and their Doctors were the first who have established the true nature of Schism.

AS to what respects the Power, the Authority, and the Jurisdiction of Pastors, they acknowledge no other in the Church than that which is confined in every particular Church, and which goes not beyond persuasion, or at the farthest a declaration that it makes, that it no longer owns such and such, either for the Pastors, or Members of its Society: And this is what is done by a natural right, and not in shooting out the thunderclaps of Excommunication, or deposition against them for Excommunication is not a business that is much disputed of among them. The hereticks and the wicked, being condemned by their own confession, have no need to be excommunicated, because they are excommunicated of themselves, as the Bishop *Godean* tells us in his Paraphrase upon the eleventh Verse, of the third Chapter of the Epistle to *Titus*, *A man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition reject, knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*; and it is what he says, after *Saint Jerome*. If any one of their Assemblies practise Excommunication, it is that of the Ancient Christians, it is not a privation from the holy Supper, but an ejection of the body out of the Assembly, no longer to be reckoned any of their Members.

CHAP. VI.

An Answer to those who say that the Congregational way is Incompatible with the Civil power; and that it deprives the Magistrate of the Right he hath to the Government of the Church; that it is Introductory of Irreligion, Ignorance, and Schism in the Church.

THE four and twentieth Chapter of their confession of faith, condemns those who speak of them, as of persons that despise Superiour Powers: For it is easy to demonstrate that their way is so far from being, as *Monsieur Daille* believed, pernicious; and such as troubles the peace of the world, or which over-throws the Governments of it, and the authority both of Sovereigns and their states, that, on the contrary, there is no way in the world which contributes more to the strengthening of Empires, Especially of Monarchies; and which ought lesse disquiet the Crowned heads for fear lest they should cause by it any commotions in the State, than theirs: For as they do not set up and establish any Ecclesiastical tribunal independent on the Magistrate, which draws along with it the two thirds of the most considerable persons of the State, especially, those who are most nice and Scrupulous, in Religion; it is impossible that there should be any troubles made by leagues and confederations in that manner as may be in all the Presbyterian Churches of a Nation, and as those practise it, when they forme to themselves, as oft times they have done an Assembly of their deputies.

A L L the world knowes, that these general and National Assemblies of the Clergy, have been formidable to Kings and Parliaments; because they are as an Altar, and a Sovereign Ecclesiastical power; opposed to a Sovereign and civil power, of which there have been seen pernicious effects in *Scotland*, and which *France*, would have found, if the reformed Religion had prevailed over the Romish: And I am very much persuaded that nothing so much diverted *Henry* the fourth from the thoughts he might have had to establish the Reformed

formed Religion in *France*, as the apprehension he had that his actions, being somewhat free, might be too far lookt into and examined by the Synods and the Consistories, and that his person should be brought under their Jurisdiction.

AS therefore the Independants do condemn these Maxims, and these practises, which are absolutely contrary to theirs; how ill intended soever they were, or might be, it is no more possible for them to set up in a Kingdom, a Sovereign Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, than for all the Companies of Merchants and Tradesmen, or for all the Families of *France* to erect a Tribunal, and a Merchandizing, or Oecumenical Power, which may be equal with that of the Civil State.

IN a word, as the Congregational Churches do neither receive Ordinances, nor Commandments from their Synods, but only counsells and advice, and that they cannot assemble in a body by their deputies, they give a great advantage unto Magistrates to possess an intire and perfect Sovereignty, and to take for their *Motto, Divide & Impera.* For those who deprive their Synods of all Authority, and who do not attribute to themselves any other power than that of persuasion, are the most remote of all from framing to themselves, either an Empire, or one to be chief over them.

IT IS true, their weakness is their subscribing to that Maxim of *Cicero, libr. de Officiis. Ut tutela, sic procuratio Reipublice ad utilitatem eorum qui commissi sunt, non ad eorum quibus commissi est gerunda est*: and to that of *Salvian, libr. de Providentia. Infinitam Regia Majestatis potestatem isti agnoscunt, qui infinitam divini Numinis Omnipotentiam non credunt.*

IT IS true, they are accused for depriving the Magistrate from the same Authority, and Sovereign Intendence over the Ecclesiastical State, as over that of the Civil: But notwithstanding they do sufficiently satisfy all reasonable and considerate persons of this in the four and twentieth Chapter of their Confession. Beside those who condemn that collaterality of Governments and of Tribunals, the one Ecclesiastical, and the other Civil, in one and the same territory, and who believe that it comes from the forge of *Antichrist*, and that it hath introduced Popery into the world, do not trouble themselves about resolving the difficulty, nor about assigning to each his Lawes, his Courts, his Officers, his So-

veraign, and the measure of his Power and Authority.

I add, that as the force and efficacy of Laws does not consist in, whither they are Ecclesiastical or Civil, nor in their goodness, justice, and truth; but in the will of him, or those, who sit at the Helm of Affairs, the Congregational Churches must of necessity acknowledg the force of all those Laws, whither for the Ecclesiastical, or the Civil State: only they affirm, that as the Magistrate is not Infallible, he may possibly abuse his right, and err either in the publication, or the execution of his Laws, of what Nature soever they be: and as they are not obliged to obey all Civil Laws, no more are they obliged to obey all Laws Ecclesiastical; they affirm also, that as the Empire of *Jesus Christ*, in matters of Religion, is not over the bodies, but over the hearts of men, the Magistrate who is the Protector and Defender of the visible Church of *Jesus Christ* in his Territories, sins extremely, when he makes Laws and Ordinances that do violence to the bodies of his Subjects, and that take from them that liberty, which every man ought to have in the choice of his Religion, and in the manner of serving God.

BUT that crime which is imposed on them, supposing it to be one, is incomparably less, than that of *Presbyterian* Churches, all which follow the establishment, and the practise of *Calvin*, who set up in *Geneva* an Ecclesiastical Tribunal, Independant and distinct from that of the Magistrate: insomuch that a learned man, nam'd *Monsieur Jurieu*, has writ a large Book, wherein he endeavours to prove, that the Sovereign Magistrate, considered as such, has not any jurisdiction, nor Intendence over the Collected Churches in his Dominions, and that he hath no other right than that of Inspection, and considered as a Christian, and one of his principal Members, wherein *Monsieur Jurieu* is more *Independant* than the *Independants* themselves, and he does not afford so much Authority to the Magistrate over the Churches that are collected within his Territories and Dominions, as the *Independants* do.

THE Independant Churches and their Pastors are very wide from these thoughts and practises: For the Authority of every Congregation, being as that of every Family, what liberty soever it has to govern it self according to its own way and humour, it is not, neither in right, nor in power, nor even in will, to set up a Tribunal distinct from, and Independent on that of the Magistrate.

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AFTER all, a Prince who should endeavour to establish an Arbitrary Power in his Kingdom, that should depend only upon God and his Sword, might imagine he should be less hindred by several thousands of Independant Congregations, not only on him, and on his Courts, but also the one Independant on the other; than by one entire body of all those Churches, which should set up by their deputies an Ecclesiastical Tribunal distinct from, and Independant on the Civil: For the strength of all those Independant Congregations, would be like that of several threads, which may easily be broke one after another, whereas the strength of all those Churches joyned in one body, would be like to that of all those threads twisted together, which it would be almost, if not absolutely, impossible to break, or to undo, but by the same way that *Alexander* took to break the Gordian-knot.

AS the Independent Churches do come the nearest to those of the *Apostles*, so likewise they are further off, than any of the other reformed Churches, from that thought and practise which has accomplished the Mystery of Iniquity, which is nothing else but the Empire of the Clergy, and so consequently That of the *Pope*, in the Empire of the secular Powers, under the Mask and Disguise of Religion, and Ecclesiastical power.

AS to the Objection that is made against them, that in case there should be no other Ecclesiastical Establishment in a Kingdom than theirs, the three fourths of the Inhabitants would live in great negligence, and a gross Ignorance of Religion. To that they say, that their way does not exempt Pastors from attending upon the Office of their Ministry, at all times and places, both within and without their particular Congregations; and to take the same pains as the *Presbyterian* Ministers do, for what respects the preaching of the word in the most publick places: also they do very much approve, that the Magistrate should erect Academies, and Colledges; assign Tithes, and Revenues, and Temples; establish persons to be employed in the instruction of people in publick, to invite them to it, and to excite the Ignorant to frequent the Schools, and the Lectures of the Professors of Arts and Sciences, where they should go for the love of vertue and knowledge, without being constrained.

AS to the crime of *Schism*, which is imposed on them, as their being separte from all the visible Churches of *Jesus Christ*, in the same manner as the *Donatists*, the *Novatians*, and the *Luciferians* did:

'tis a false Accu sation. Those who accuse them of *Schism*, do not understand the nature of *Schism*.

1. 'TIS not *Schism*, when a particular Church separates from another Church, as the Church of *Luther* from that of *Calvin*, nor the *Protestants* from the *Papists*: nor even one particular reformed Church from some other, with which it made before but one body of a Church: But true *Schism* is formed among the Members of one and the same particular Church, as was that of *Corinth*.

2. 'TIS not *Schism* when a number of *Hereticks* separate from the Orthodox party of a particular Church, to make a Congregation apart, to the end they may profess their *heresie* with greater liberty, but it is an Apostasie, and an abandoning and forsaking of the Orthodox faith, or Church of *Jesus Christ*, which is Catholic and visible: and upon this ground the Church of *Rome* is not a *Schismatical*, but an *Apostate* Church; although it be one for the first reason, because that what engagement or tie soever all its Members have to one head, however they are not all agreed together. *Schism* properly is when the Members of one Church are at variance, as were those of the Church of *Corinth*, and upon that account there is alwayes a *Schism* in the *Romish* Church.

3. THERE is no *Schism* among several particular Churches that differ one from the other in discipline, but that retain and keep all the same foundation and ground of faith, and who have for that point a great union, and a strict correspondence with other Churches. And this being so, no more is there any *Schism*, when the Congregationals are *Independant* on other Churches, and on their *Synods*, but when their Churches are so among themselves.

4. THERE is no *Schism* among several particular Churches that agree in one and the same faith, and discipline, as are those of *Metz* and *Sedan*, but do their own business apart *independantly*, not only on one another, but likewise on the *Synods*. 'Tis with *Independant* Churches, or with several other particular Churches, as with several families, or Neighbourhoods, or those that are pretty distant the one from the other, who may all be good friends, and live in good Intelligence together, without any thing of *Schism*, or rupture between them, and yet every one does their own particular business by themselves.

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5. THE Congregational men are no more guilty of *Schism*, when they form to themselves Congregations, distinct from Parishes contrary to the command of the Magistrate; 'tis a disobedience, not to a National Church which *Jesus Christ* hath not instituted, much less invested with either Jurisdiction or power to make Laws in matters of Religion; but to the Magistrate, whom to disobey is not *Schism*, but a crime of *lese Majestatis*, or rebellion; but yet it ceases to be that too, when it acts only from this principle of *obeying God rather than men*.

NOW this clearing up of the Nature of *Schism*, which strongly establishes the *Independancy* of the Churches, and makes it altogether reasonable, does not destroy the Confederation of the Churches into one body, even under a rational *Synod*, when for the mutual preservation of these Churches against a common Enemy that persecutes them, they are constrained to make but one body of State or of Churches, such as is the Confederation of our Churches in *France*. But then that necessity does not destroy the natural liberty of every particular Church to be *Independant*: 'tis a Confederation established with prudence, in that manner as was that of the Cities of *Achaïda*, and as is at this day that of the *Low-Countries*, and of the *Swizers*; the conjunction, of which into one body, and under one and the same jurisdiction does not divest any Town or Province of their natural freedom and liberty to be *Independant* on one another.

THERE is however this temper, and ménage to be observed in this Religious Confederation, that it ought to be made, not by virtue of the Power of binding and loosing, and of the Keys of the Kingdome of heaven, which it is pretended that *God* hath committed to Pastors, or *Synods*; but by virtue of a confederated discipline, which is in the place of a Magistrate. Also the Council of *Monsieur Amyraut* should be observed, and it is the same that the Cities of *Achaïa* observed before, *viz.* that nothing should pass in the general Assembly, but what has been first reviewed, and approved of by every particular Church.

AND this is that wherein the prudence of our first Reformers in *France* have been wanting, when they set up a discipline by virtue of an Ecclesiastical power distinct from that of the Magistrate, and from that which has its operation upon the heart by the Ministry of the word; and of a power fastened to the Keyes of the

Kingdome of Heaven, and to that of binding and loosing: by vertue of which power, they depose and excommunicate, that is to say, as *Monsieur Claude* says, they deliver up a person to the Devil: but they also deliver him to him in the name and Authority of *Jesus Christ*, that so the people may not imagine this power to be that of the Magistrate, or of the confederate discipline, but of *Jesus Christ*, the Mediatour, and King of his Church, and by vertue of the power that he exercises over it, and of which the Pastors and Ministers are the depositers.

AS to those who blame as much the separation of the *Independants*, as that of the *Donatists*, the *Novatians*, and *Luciferians*, it is ill grounded: the vice of the *Donatists* was in that they owned no other Church of *Jesus Christ* in the World than theirs: for they rebaptized those who came from the Catholick Church to them: the *Independants* are far from these thoughts and practices: they do as those who having a particular care of their health, withdraw into a better place, and sounder Air, but yet they do not think, but that they may do very well in places, where the Air is not so good.

BEFORE I go to another Chapter, I shall take notice that the result of the thoughts, and of the practices of the Congregationalists, their Churches and their Pastors, do come to these two Maxims.

I. THAT to establish peace and true Religion in the World, and among Christians; we must go back to the *Materia prima* of the Congregational Churches, which is, that every person, and every Society hath the liberty to deliberate and consult about the choice of a Religion, and of the way to serve *God*; and to take upon that point the counsel of wise and sincere persons, provided that that counsel tends not to Irreligion, and to some Establishment of such maxims which shock the natural Notions concerning the existence of a *God*, his Providence, the Immortality of the soul, the necessity of a Divine Worship; provided also that the manner which every person, and every Church hath chosen to govern it self by, doth not trouble the State in which one lives; unless that trouble happen by accident, in the manner that *Jesus Christ* says of the *Gospel*, which excites troubles, and brings Wars and contentions into the World.

2. THAT this maxim of a national Church in every Territory,

tory, with an uniformity of Doctrine, and discipline, distinct from the civil Tribunals in jurisdiction and officers, hath introduced the Pope into the World; that it hath been, it is, and it will be the cause that there never will be a Church in the World in its true purity, unless *Almighty God* reserves some among the Congregational Churches.

CHAP. VII.

That the Congregational way has been practised in all Ages of the World.

I Could easily shew that for above this four thousand years before *Jesus Christ*, and even during the height of *Popery*, and in the bosome of the Church of *Rome*, *God* hath alwayes reserved some true Worshippers of *Jesus Christ*, by the way of Congregational Assemblies; there were an infinite number of them in the *Roman Empire*, during the persecution that was set on foot by the *Arrians*, and when, as *St. Jerome* says, all the World were *Arrians*.

BUT to come more particularly to the thing; they have had *Independant Churches* in all times, and in all places, before the *Law*, and under the *Law*, in the time of *Jesus Christ*, and of the *Apostles*, and after the *Apostles*, there were of them in the time of *Noah* the Son of *Seth*; for so must be understood the last Verse of the fourth Chapter of *Genesis*, when men began to call upon the name of the Lord: that from his time the Children of *God* began to form themselves into particular Congregations, and to separate from those that ran after the World, and its vanities, and to be called the Children of *God* or of *Jehova*, and to pay their adorations to him as to their Creator and Benefactor. The family of *Noah* and his *Ark*, was a Congregational Church, which *God* had separated from all the rest of the World. The family of *Job*, that of *Abraham*, *Josuah*, *Samuel*, were *Independant Churches*. *Palestine* was full of them, as *Maimonides* tells us, and they were truly *Independant*, because they neither had any thing to do with the nation-

nal Church, nor with its tribunal, nor *Sanhedrim*. And so likewise the Guides, who were called *Prophets, Seers, and Doctors* were not of the tribe of *Levi*, but of another tribe: and it is from those that the *Doctors* of the *Law* came, which *Jesus Christ* speaks of, the *Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Esseni*. They called their Societies *μεγαλυναι*, Colledges, houses of Prayer, and Synagogues, where they did not attend upon the *Levitical* Worship, but on Prayer, exhortation, and the expounding of the *Law*, and we see the first establishment of them in the first Verses of the three and twentieth Chapter of *Leviticus*, they were distant one from the other the space of a Sabbath day's Journey, they were nearer one another whilst they stayed in the Wilderness, and were then called *Tents*, as were those of *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, which were also *Independent Churches*. *David* calls the Congregation that he frequented, *Sanctuary*, where he consulted the mouth of *God* about his being healed from his prejudices against the dispensation of *God* towards the generation of good men, who were often times under the Rod, and in affliction; whilst the wicked were in prosperity: and in the 87 *Psalms*, he speaks of the esteem that he had for those Congregations or houses of Prayer which he did set forth by the *Tents of Jacob*, although that which he had for the *Ark*, or for the gates of *Zion*, and for his propitiatory, were greater. To conclude, the seven thousand men, that had not bowed their knee to *Baal*, were *Independent Churches*; for it cannot be thought that so great a number of persons could assemble together in one place, and that too in a time of so great persecution.

THERE were of them in the time of *Jesus Christ*; for the Apostolical Colledge was an *Independent Church*, and in his time, two or three persons assembled in his name, made a Church, as also says *Tertullian*, *ubi tres, ibi Ecclesia, etiam si Laici*. Immediately after the Ascension of *Jesus Christ*, the first Assembly of Christians in *Jerusalem* was *Independent*; and that where *Cornelius* and his family were assembled, was a Congregational Church, of which *St. Peter* was the Pastor for some days. *Philemon* had one of them in his house. Those of whom *Pliny the younger* speaks, *Epist. 97. libr. 10.* were others of them. *Affirmabant hanc fuisse summam vel erroris, vel culpæ, quod soliti essent, statò die, ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem, sequæ Sacramento ne in Scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia,*

tröcinia, ne Adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. Tertullian. *libr. de Coron. Milit.* adds that it was the Custome in those Assemblies before day, to Celebrate the holy Supper. The *Independent Churches of England*, at least some of them, are formed after this Model, and exact from their Members; that they shall abstain from those crimes of which *Pliny* makes mention.

NOW that custome of the Christians in the time of *Pliny*, which exacted from the Members of their Churches, a life perfectly exemplary, stops the mouths of those, who turn into rally, the *Independent Assemblies*, because they only do admit of those that are holy, and in whom they find the marks and signs of Regeneration, and who oblige themselves by Oath, or verbal promise, to abstain from those crimes that *Pliny* here has reckoned up; or to undergo the Penalty set, according to the discipline of the Church.

ALSO that custome of the Christians testifies, that besides the numerous Churches, as for instance that of *Corinth*, which consisted of several thousands, where it could not be otherwise but that there must be a good number of *Hereticks*, and debauched and loose persons, there were established other Congregational, taken out of the great Church, whereof the Members were more holy and more Orthodox; and who resembled those whom *Pliny* speaks of, and those *Stations* which *Tertullian* mentions: where beside the publick Assemblies, some families set a part by themselves one day of the week to fasting, to prayer, and other exercises of Piety, and also to the Celebration of the holy Supper: and this is what they frequently practised, and with good edification: for it is with small Churches, as with small States, little Republicks, Families, particular *Synods* of twenty five or thirty persons; wherein it is much more easie to establish a good order, and to bring those who are of it unto the practise of good manners and life, than in great States, in great Churches, and *Oecumenical Synods*, and such as are *National*, wherein Ambition, Envy, Factions, Avarice, *φιλαργία*, and *φιλαργία*, and corruptions reign, and cannot but do so. *Strada* says very judiciously. *In confessu plurimum Senatorum, aut Consiliariorum, partes suas magis agit Ambitio, quam in paucorum.* *Lucian*, *libro de Artibus dolesit*, in speaking of great Assemblies, says, *the greatest Bawlers have the greatest advantage in such Assemblies, because*

those who understand nothing of the matter, and so be sure, are always of the greatest number, judge of things by the outside, and so give the cause for gained, to those who are the most resolute and clamorous.

THESE considerations do furnish me with several others, which confirm me in this Opinion, that the Congregational way was that which God made use of, in the Ancient Church, to convert to the faith, those, who were not Christians, but by outward profession, from a State of nature to a State of Grace: and that the way which they take at this day, when one person preaches to several thousands is neither properly, nor efficaciously that which gains souls to Jesus Christ. And this will appear by the opposition of the Government at this day in the Church, to that of the antient Primitive Christians. I believe, there will be found but very little conformity; not only, in the persons that attend upon the Ministry, but also in the places, and manner, where, and how it is performed. Heretofore the Bishop alone in publick did execute the office of preaching, and the other duties of the holy Ministry; for he left those of lesser consequence to the Deacons; but at this day just the Reverse is practised, and maintained. 'Tis now only the Priest that preaches in publick in the Assemblies of several thousands. And likewise as the extent of the place unto which the Ministry of these at this day is confined, is called *ναὐρχία*, so it was also heretofore that of the Bishop, and he most commonly dated his Letters thus *ex mea parœcia*. Which, by the way, plainly shewes us, that the Intendancie and Government of the Bishop in the Primitive Church, was only over a Town or *Villa*, which they called a *Parish* or a *Suburb*, for also every *Villa* and Burrough had their *Chorepiscopus*. *Monsieur Larroque*, without thinking of it, makes it clear and evident, that it was the Ancient practise, for the Bishop alone to have the charge of preaching in the greatest, and most numerous Assemblies; because the Bishops being aged and sick, they called to his help and assistance, not the Priests of the Bishop's Presbytry, but some neighbour Bishops. He tells us of one *Narcissus*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, who, being a hundred and sixteen years old, had for his Coadjutor *Alexander*, that had been Bishop of *Capadocia*; and of one *Theoctenus*, Bishop of *Cesarea*, that shared the care of his Episcopacy with *Anatolius*, who, in truth, was not as yet Bishop, but who, was then consecrated and called Bishop: which plainly shewes that:

that a Priest could not be his Coadjutor. This is also confirmed by the example of *Valerius* Bishop of *Hippo*, who being old and decayed, took not one of those who was to continue in the Presbytry for his Coadjutor; but he took *Saint Austin*, who was to be his Successor, and who also was called Bishop of *Hippo* during the life of *Valerius*.

AS to those of the Presbytry, who were called Deacons, as they were the Creatures of the Bishop, and wholly at his Devotion, so likewise their Ministry was that which is spoken of in the 6. of the *Acts*, which was not that of preaching in publick.

AS for the Priests or Elders, who were not Deacons, they did not ordinarily preach in publick assemblies, whence it happened, that we read of very few Homilies composed and made by the Priests. Their Ministry was concluded and bound within the apartment or *parochia* of the Bishop, and, as I have already said, it was less fixe, and more Itinerant, for they went from house to house: there was not a day past but that the Priest, or Elder, visited the good Families, went to prayers there; expounded the word, and administered the holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper to them: and as for Baptism, it was most commonly celebrated by the Deacons in great Assemblies, or in great Churches, at the entrance of which, the Fonts were placed, or the *Baptisterium*.

THIS true, the Bishops did frequently oppose those private assemblies, and by their *Synods* and *Canons* (so far as that the *Synode* of *Constance* anathematized them) called in derision those that frequented them *Acophiles*, and condemned even those that communicated with them. They would do the like also to persons of quality that kept in their houses Priests, and Oratories. 'Tis true also, *Saint Chrysostome* would have the Lords Supper to be as publick as Baptism, and that both should be celebrated and performed in the eyes of the whole World.

BUT because it would scarcely be believed, that one Bishop singly, as *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, *Cyril* of *Jerusalem*, and *Saint Chrysostome* of *Constantinople*, could preach in publick one Lord's day, to above a hundred thousand Auditors that were in each of their *Villa's*; they say, that of necessity several of the Presbytry must perform the office of Preachers in those other places of the City where the Bishop did not preach: and this appears by the Homilies of *Saint Chrysostome*, *ad populum Antiochenum*, when he was not Bishop: That is true, but also those Priests had no fixe places,

no cure, nor certain parish, over which they were pastors, because the Bishop himself was the Curate of the Parish; so that the Priests were only the Vicars of the Bishops, in the same manner as *Nicholas* 1. called the Bishop of Germany, and of France, *Subs Episcopos & Vicarios*. Those Priests were, as the Deacons at the devotion of the Bishop, and were entirely his Creatures, and they might rather (I am sure better) be called the Ministers of the Bishop, than of *Jesus Christ*, or of the Church, as it appears by the six and twentieth Canon of the Synod of *Agde*, for they were like persons taken upon hire, and to whom the Bishop gave Salary for their pains and trouble.

AFTER all these discoveries and Manifestations, there is no doubt but that the Churches in the time of the Apostles, and for a long while after, were congregational, and Independent on Synodes, since that even every Family of the most considerable, and better sort was a Church, or, at least, they had one among them, where the exercises of Piety were regularly performed every day, and where, during their repast, the holy Scripture was read, as we may learn from the first Epistle to Timothy, Chapter the IV. verse the fifth. For every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer. And where before they departed, or, indeed, rose from Table, they received the Communion as *Tertullian* tells us in his book *de Corona Militis*, declaring that this practice was agreeing with the institution of *Jesus Christ*, as it was also practised much in the 3. Age in the time of Saint Cyprian, as he tells us in one of his Epistles, *Quotidie communicamus*. Although several families, every Lord's day, made very great and Numerous Assemblies, where in most solemn manner they attended upon prayer, preaching, and celebration of the holy Supper, yet he, who performed the Action, was called *Primus Presbyter, presens, & Episcopus*. To which it seems Saint Paul hath respect in his 1. Epistle to Timothy. 5. 17. Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and Doctrine; where, though, in the words, he does not speak of two kinds of Pastors, or Ministers, distinct in rank and dignity, nor even in office, yet notwithstanding he does insinuate in that place, that in the Presbytery, and in the Company of the Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, named indifferently Bishops, Elders, and Presbyters, there were some that were Deacons,

Deacons, and whose gifts were less for praying and preaching in publick. 398

FOR though I believe that the *Apostles* did not establish diverse degrees of Pastors, and that in their time, and a long while after, they were called indifferently Bishops, Priests, Elders, *sacerdotes*, Ministers, and Deacons: And that the same Deacons bore a part in the Ministry of the word, with the rest, as it is seen, for Example, in Saint Stephen, and Phillip, and by what *Clemens Alexandrinus* tells us in the sixth book of his *stromates*, and Mr. James Capel in his *Catechisme*: yet it is most certain that from the second age, they were distinguished in names and offices, that the first Priest, or Bishop, attended more peculiarly upon preaching in publick, and the Priests and Deacons upon the *functions* of lesser consequence, as *almsh-giving &c.* from whence it is, that we read so often of the first Bishops of Rome, that such a one created so many Priests, so many Deacons, and that Hyggen in the year 141. created fifteen Priests, fifteen Deacons, and six Bishops. That Eleutherius in the year 184. ordained 12 Priests, 8 Deacons, and 15 Bishops, not to serve in the Church of Rome, but in other places, where the Bishop, who had ordained them, was to attend upon the *preaching* in publick, and the Priests and Deacons upon the other *functions* of the holy Ministry; for their Ministry was less fixt; they went to break bread from house to house, they instructed, they comforted, they confirmed Christians, and those whom they called *Fideles* in the profession of the Christian Religion, and in the Practice of Piety, and drew over Jews and Gentiles to them, and they baptized them, adding every day some or other to the Church of *Jesus Christ* to be saved. In a word, they formed almost as many independant Churches, as there were families, but which then did not constitute a Communion distinct from that of the same *Fideles* in the greater and more numerous Assemblies, and where they assisted, not only at the hearing of the word, but also at the participation of the holy supper, and all the sacred Ceremonies, as *Monsieur le Suenr* tells us.

I must needs make one observation here which will be of no mean consequence, as to what I have said, about the diversity of the names of Bishop, Priest, Elder, *Sacerdote*, and Deacon in the same Ministry, against those who would fain persuade us, that not only this *Intendance* of a Bishop over the Priests, but also the

Prerogative.

prerogative that they attribute to themselves of having alone the Authority and the right to ordain Pastors, is of *divine right*, and by the Institution of the *Apostles*; I must needs observe, I say, that since the words, and the Offices have been distinguished, *Christian Antiquity* never thought this *Intendance* and *Prerogative* to be of *divine right*, because it was in the liberty of a Bishop to abandon the order, or office of Bishop, without quitting the office of Priest, or of Minister of *Jesus Christ*, and indeed without being able to do it, unless he were constrained to it by the sentence of deposition. They did deprive themselves then of an humane, arbitrary, and Mutable order, unto which they were called by men, but they could not divest themselves of that which they had received from *Jesus Christ*. That was the Judgment of the Council of *Ancyra* in the year 314. which having deposed some persons from the Episcopacy, left them in the Presbytry. This is what the sixth Oecumenical Council did, *Canon* twenty, which deposed a Bishop, but did not take from him the Presbytry; so that if there was then an Indelible Character, it was not that of Bishop, but that of Presbyter, and this is the farther confirmed, and more strongly, by this consideration, that, as it was an Usurpation, or at least a Right purely humane, when one of the Members of the Presbytry, who was called Bishop, attributed to himself alone the right and the office of *Preaching* in publick, and not of communicating it to others, but only as far as he pleased: The same Judgment ought to be made of this *Intendance* over Priests, and this *prerogative* to ordain; and to conclude, that neither Episcopacy, nor the power to ordaine, nor that to preach in publick, which one person reserved peculiarly to himself, were of *Christ's* Institution.

THIS is, if I am not mistaken, an observation, which has not as yet by any been thought on, but which is the unravelling of all the difficulties that those great men *Monsieur Daille* the Father, *Monsieur Larroque* &c. On one side, and *Monsieur Pearson* Bishop of *Chester* on the other, have formed concerning either the Establishment, or the overthrow of Episcopacy. And here now is the Resolution of the words of *Saint Jerome*, which have put so many people on the rack, and have spent both so much precious time and paper. *Quid facit Episcopus, quod non facit presbyter, excepta ordinatione?* Which words *Marsilius de Padua* understands

stands of the power that the Bishop reserved alone to himself, by a right purely humane, to regulate the Affairs of the Church; because it would be a thing altogether absurd, to make *Saint Jerome* say, that *Jesus Christ* had in all things equalled the Priest to the Bishop, except the power to ordain. And now also you may see, by all these declarations and discoveries, a very strong establishment of the Congregational way. But I now will return from this digression to pursue the subject I left off for it.

THE conduct and Government of the *Christians* under the time of Persecution, and before that of *Constantine*, differ'd very much from the manner which was observed when the *Emperours* were *Christians*, and when they assembled together, both more publickly, and in greater numbers, enjoying their full liberty. As a Rigorous discipline under those *Christian* Emperours could not be practised but upon a small number, in great Towns, as *Rome*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, *Constantinople*, &c. Most of the persons, who could not be distinguished one from another, in the Crowd and Multitude, and on whom they could lay nothing by way of reproach, either entred into no discipline, and were neither *Penitentes*, nor *Catechumeni*, or else they passed for those who were called *fideles*; and whom they never so much as question'd whether they were baptized or not: For *Saint Ambrose*, who was looked upon as a very good man, and one of the *fideles* that frequented the Religious Assemblies both in publick and private, was neither in orders, nor baptized, when the people of *Milan* took him, and carried him away as a holy body to be a Bishop. Will they say that after he was a Bishop, he passed through all the degrees of discipline, or penitence, and that he was a *Catechumen*, and afterwards a *fidelis*? which name was given only to those, who were called Lay, or Secular persons. And the example of *Constantine the great*, who was baptized, at the very point and moment of his death, and that of *Satyrus* the brother of *Ambrose*, and of *Valentinian*, whom that Father so highly commends, and who died before they were baptized, are a very strong proof and argument for that which I here maintain.

NOW, those of the faithful who were so, rather in reality, than the name, did not under those *Christian* Emperours, quit their good custome of converting their houses, and their families into so many little Churches; they performed there the same exercises,

crosses of Piety, both during their repasts, and out of them.

BUT I must here make one remark by the way upon the passage of *Saint Paul* to *Timothy*, the 1 Epist. 4 Chap. and 5 Verse. which I lately mentioned: that that good practise of reading the holy Scriptures during their repasts, succeeded both a good and an evil custome, among the Heathen of quality and condition, according to the disposition of persons, and according to their manners: for the *debauchees* during theirs, had, as *Pliny the Younger* tells us, their *Moriones*, and their *Cynedos*, *qui inerrabant Mensis*, to pass away the time, and please the Company. But those who were serious and more composed, as *Cicero*, *Cratippus*, *Seneca*, *Pliny the Elder*, *Epaphrastes*, and *Spurinna*, had their *Anagnostes*, who read to them the *Golden Sentences* of *Pythagoras*, and of the other *Sages of Greece*. It doubtless therefore thus came, that the Heathen families which were of the disposition of these latter, being come over to *Christianity*, as was that of *Cornelius the Centurion*, *Publius the Proconsul*, *Philemon*, and *Lydia*, took this good custome, not only to have a Church in their house, but to practise there all the Religious duties as well during their repasts as out of them.

THIS comes very near to the *Idea* of the Congregational way, which is to be considered in two respects, either when their Pastors, and their people retire and withdraw from the crowd of the world, I mean; from the Worldlings, to live continually in the contemplation, and meditation of the works of Creation, of Providence, and of Redemption, in the devotion, and elevation of the Soul to God: or else, when those same persons do form to themselves Religious assemblies, distinct from the national Church, and Parochial assemblies; in a word, when they are distinct from the Ecclesiastical Government, which is of the same extent, as that of the Civil, that is establish'd by Lawes; though, in this last respect, their separation be not an absolute and intire abandoning of the profession of the doctrine, and life of those who follow the Religion of their Country; but of those who condemn that carriage, that doctrine and Discipline, which retained the most of the *Apostolical*. 'Tis a separating of the good Seed from the Chaff, whereof there is but too much in parochial Assemblies, where one is as much, if not more, a *Christian*, by the chance of birth, of place, and of custome, than by a
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ny inward principle, or design framed: for otherwise the people of the *Independant* Church, and their Pastors, are no more backward, than the Episcopal men or the Presbyterians, to participate with them, in the Ministry of the parochial Churches, provided they do not force them there to practise such things as they do really believe from their Consciences, to be contrary to the word of God, and provided also that they permit them to believe, that if the Churches reformed from *Popery*, where all sorts of persons are received, are the true Churches of *Jesus Christ*, in which Salvation may be had, they ought to have no less good and charitable opinion of the *Independant* Churches which are come out from them.

FOR these reasons, all disinterested persons, that have a zeal for all the true Worshippers of *Jesus Christ* indifferently, in what way of communion soever, whither Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Congregational, may easily be perswaded, that this last retains more of the *Apostolick*, because it is not only the Cream and best of the others; and a part of that good Seed that has the least of chaff in it; but also because it hath more goodness, love, and Charity, in the esteem of those who follow it, for the way of communion with others, and of those who are of it, then the others have for the Congregational way. 'Tis very rarely seen that any one of the Congregation does not love all good men, of what Communion soever they be, and that they do not speak of them as of the true Churches of *Jesus Christ*; whereas even the more sober, and honest party of the Episcopal men, and some of the Presbyterians, are so strongly prepossessed with prejudices against those of Congregations, that they are in their account no better than Hypocrites, Schismatics, and men of strange Enthusiasms.

A Learned Lawyer having cast his eye upon the matter contained in this Chapter, assured me, that one Mr. Hubbard a grave Barrester, in a Cause between *Colt* and *Glover* plaintiffs on the one part, and the Bishop of *Gloucester* defendant on the other, makes it out, that the Assemblies in the *Primitive* Church were Congregational. He hath also acquainted me with an Ordinance of *Caninus* KING of England, in the year one thousand and sixteen, which began thus, *he sunt sanctiones*, for the establishment of peace and Justice, where it is clear that beside the Ecclesiastical National Government, established according to the Model of the civil,

the Towns were full of little private Congregations, which assembled together voluntarily in the Towns, and which the *King* permitted, whilst neither Justice, nor the publick peace, were interrupted. He prest me likewise mightily to insist upon the definition which the Church of *England* made of the Church in its Confession of Faith made in the year, 1562. Article the *XLX.* because it is absolutely conformable to that which the Congregational Churches give of theirs, to be, as I have already a little touched, an Assembly of persons together in one place, to attend upon the bearing of the word of *God*, and upon the Administration of the Sacraments.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the great Benefits and Advantages that come from the Establishment of the Congregational way in the World.

THUS you see we are insensibly fallen upon the conformity of the carriage and government of the *Congregational* assemblies, with that of the *Primitive Christians*, for their smallness of number, and for the way and manner of gaining souls to *Jesus Christ*, by Prayer, by Exhortation, and by Preaching, which they do to a few persons, or a few Families; as when their Elders inculcated into them every day, and *line upon line*, the necessity of leading holy and exemplary lives: so that the *Christian* people made far greater progress in Sanctification, by the means and helps of those Elders, than when they assisted at publick assemblies, where the severities of discipline, and the degrees of penitence, through which but very few persons went, secur'd to retain more of the affected devotion, of pride, and of worldly pomp, than of sincerity, and where the fruit of the Bishop's preaching, was like to that, of which *S. Chrysostome* speaks in one of his Homilies, which resembles the water that is thrown in Buckets upon a great number of Bottles, which have a strait Neck, and where there goes in but a few drops, whereas the fruit of the exhortations which are made in private to a few, is the effect of him, who having taken the bottles, will fill them by de-

degrees one after another. Beside that, it is impossible, that a Bishop, or other person, who shares out all his time between his Chamber-studies, and preaching in publick, and who hath some thousands of persons under charge, it is impossible, I say, that he can suffice, and attend upon the Instruction of all those Auditors, and of every one of them in particular, which is most easy to be done by the way that the Pastors of *Independant* Churches take, whereof every Congregation is not, at the most, above two hundred persons, and who are also eased and help'd by their *Coadjutors* in the work of the holy Ministry, so that this kind of Congregational way, seems to be the accomplishment of the Prophecy concerning the Covenant of Grace which *God* was to make in the last times with his people, where there shall be no more need to have recourse to the Bishop, or to his Curate for receiving instruction, because every person, who is in the Covenant of Grace (as the greatest number of those who compose those Congregations do belong to that Covenant,) shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and the Pastor himself shall go to visit his sheep and take a particular care of them: So likewise this is the way of the Pastors of the little flock of *Jesus Christ* to whom he will give the Kingdom.

THERE are also other Considerations which confirm me absolutely in this opinion that *God*, in a more especial manner, approves of the Congregational way: One is, that, most an end, in all others, the Ministers are influenced by worldly interest, by ambition, and the desire of ruling, that its Establishment could never be made without noise, and without the opposition of the Magistrate and the people: for they have been always against this erection of a National tribunal *Independant* on the Magistrates, who never had given their consent to it, till after the advocates and pleaders for this national tribunal had been indefatigably buzzing into their ears these fair and specious *Remonstrances*; that it was the voice of *God*, and of *Jesus Christ* that the world should be governed by two Collateral powers. This is what the *Decretals* made the Kings and the people to believe in the ninth age, and they strongly insisted that the Bishop of *Rome* was to be at the head of the Ecclesiastical power, and to prescribe laws to them by the Ministry of his Clergy for the regulating of Religion, and for the Affaires of the Church. And

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this is what *Calvin* also made those to believe, who left the Church of *Rome*, when he erected a Tribunal for the matters of Religion, in which the Magistrates should not be seen in the quality of Magistrates, but only as Members of the consistory: But yet a Tribunal that should be as much invested with *Incontestability*, and with a power not to appeal from it, as that of *Rome* is with *Infallibility*. And this is what *Calvin* carried by main force, not only against the will of the Magistrate, and of the people of *Geneva*, but against the practise of all Churches, and against the Judgment of all the Divines of his time.

BUT it hath not been so with the Establishment of the Congregational way, to which the people have had as great an Inclination, and natural forwardness as the Pastors themselves. Which has been seen in *England* for above this forty years. For of more than *sixscore* persons, who made up the Assembly of Ministers, there was above a *hundred* of them for the *Presbyterian* Government, and about eight or ten for the *Congregational* way, and two only, *Coleman*, and *Lightfoot*, for the opinion of *Erastus*. Yet nevertheless, when it came to the Execution and practise, there was not one of ten thousand people that would submit to the *Presbyterian* Government. And one of them, who was the most Eminent, confessed to me, that being Pastor of the greatest Parish in *London*, he was never able to establish in it a consistory, nor find any that would be of it but a pitiful *Scotch* Taylor. This difficulty was not seen as to the *Congregational* way, for whereas only the Pastors were for the *Presbyterian* way, there were proportionably, as many people as Ministers, who joined in the Assemblies of the *Congregational* way. Which they did with more heat and fervour than the *Parliament* would have had them; in so much that they were forced to publish a Declaration, by which they exhorted the people to put off the gathering of Churches, till the *Parliament* had made a more publick regulation thereof. As to the opinion of *Erastus*, though it was not approved in the Assembly but by two Divines, it had notwithstanding the applause of most of the Magistrates, of the learned and more illuminated, who were not of the Gown; which discovers.

1. THAT Interest is the Toole, and Engine that moves most men in the world; and that, if the Magistrates were for an *Intendance*, which the *Presbyterians* would take away from

from them; these were no less in love with, and eager of it.

2. THAT it is very probable, that the *Advocates* of the Congregational way were sincere, whilst their number had a just proportion of Ministers, Magistrates, and People that were much for it.

I proved in the sixth Chapter of my *Jugulum causæ*, that of these two truths, the first was put beyond all peradventure, that *Totus Mundus exercet histrionem*, that the greatest men do oft times mix some grain of wordly interest with that of Heaven, adding not the *Utile* to the *honestum*, but the *honestum* to the *Utile*; espousing, or quitting their Opinion according as they are actuated by the moving principle of *sua cuique Utilitas*, as *Tacitus* speaks. For they resemble Pope *Pius II.* who, being a *Cardinal* submitted the *Pope* to the *Council*, but he changed his Opinion, as soon as ever he came to be *Pope* himself. Much about twenty years since, the Learned *Dr. Stillingfleet* preferred the *Presbyterian* Government to the *Episcopal*; but now he has had several fat benefices bestowed upon him, and he is advanced to the Deanry of *S. Paul*, Episcopacy is most excellent, both in his esteem and opinion, and in his writings.

THIS way is so much the more excellent, just, and reasonable, as it hath a Compatibility with the Government of a National Church, which makes but one entire body with that of the Republick, as under the legal Oeconomy; whereas the Government of a National Church, distinct and *Independant* upon that of the Republick, is not compatible with any government, neither with that of the Magistrate, nor with that of the Congregational Churches; though the government of this latter might be compatible with all kinds of Government, if it would be suffered; for a multitude of small Congregational Churches is as much compatible with the *Civil State*, as is a multitude of Families; because neither the one nor the other do form to themselves a body by their deputies which establishes a Tribunal distinct from, and *independant* on that of the *Civil State*; whereas the Popish, Episcopal, and Presbyterian Government, erects a Tribunal in every Territory *independant* on all others. *Calvin* gave the first Model of it in *Geneva*; *Volui*, sayes he, *ut Judicium Ecclesiasticum distinctum esset à Civili*: and he makes these two Tribunals so *independant*, one on the other, as hotly to maintain, that he would rather suffer death or banishment, than permit the appeals of *Consistorial* Sentences to the *Magistrate*.

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TO be short, the Congregational way hath this advantage over all the other establishments of Religion, both the National, Popish, Episcopal and Presbyterian Church: these cannot subsist but with a subordination of Consistories, *Colloquies*, Provincial and National *Synods*; things which are not practicable, but under Secular Powers, either which may approve them, or else may tolerate them; whereas the Congregational way subsists not only under good Emperours, as were *Constantine the Great*, and *Theodosius the first*, but also under the Pagan *Dioclesians*, and under an *Arrian Constantius*: for what persecution soever may be raised against this way, nothing hinders, but that a Minister who watches over a small flock, may go to visit the Members from house to house, to administer spiritual pasture, and food to them, for their nourishment and *growth in grace*. To conclude, the excellence of this way appears in this, that it is far less exposed to persecution than any other, and that the Presbyterian, and the Episcopal, do fall into it when the Magistrate is contrary to them.

CHAP. IX.

That the most Judicious Divines of France and other places, without any thoughts of it, do naturally fall into the Hypotheses of the Congregational Churches. Of the Judgment which ought to be made of their Confession of Faith, of their discipline, and conduct.

I Could also strengthen all that I have said by the testimony of our new Doctors, by that of *Monsieur Rivet*, *Monsieur Mestrezat*, *Monsieur Pajon*, *Monsieur Claude*, and others, showing that they undesignedly fall into the Opinion and Judgment of the *Independants* in laying down.

1. THAT there is no other visible Church, of Divine right, than that which is assembled together in one place, to attend upon the preaching, and hearing of the word, upon prayer, and the participation of the Sacraments: and it is in this man-

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ner that the Confession of the Church of *England*, Article XIX, defines the Church.

2. THAT such a Church is *Independant* either on other Churches, or on *Synods*; that it may very well take from one or other, advice and Counsel, but it ought not to submit to their Commands.

3. THAT no person can be forced to be a *Christian*, nor to joyn with one Church, rather than with another.

4. THAT this Church hath liberty to do its own business its self; or to connect into one body, in the same manner as the Churches of *France* have done; that it hath the liberty to retire from that connection, or confederacy, as the Churches of *Metz* and *Sedan* have done.

5. THAT this Church to which the *Christian* is joyned, is obliged to seek, and to preserve a strict communion of Faith and Charity with the other Churches, but yet hath a liberty of having a separate discipline.

6. THAT this Church ought to receive the fraternal admonitions of the other Churches, and of their *Synods*, in the same manner as a *Synod* of *Africk* acted upon the dissention which hapned between *Innocent* the first, Bishop of *Rome*, and the Church of *Alexandria*, as *Barlaam* recites it.

I could also find these maxims in the Writings of the English Divines, and shew that in treating of the nature of the Church, or of any other matter of divinity, they have kept the language of the *Independants*, or at least have approved of their practices. The Learned *Jackson*, Chap. 14. of the Church, says, that for these two causes one may lawfully frame Congregations distinct from others, to have a separate Communion.

1. WHEN they impose such practices as are contrary to Faith and Charity.

2. WHEN they forbid wayes that are apparently most edifying, and tend more to the increase and strength of Piety and Salvation, than those which are now in use.

Dr. *Stillingfleet* assures us in pag. 109. of his *Trenicurn*, that when in one and the same Territory, Judgments and Churches are different the one from the other, a *Christian* ought to joyn to that which retains most of the *Evangelical* purity. He is bound to adhere to that Church that retaineth most of the *Evangelical* purity. And

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in pag. 116. he sayes that a *Christian* is obliged to separate from Churches, although Orthodox in the essential matters, in case they retain some mixture of corruption in the practise. His Words are, *a mixture of corruption, as to the practise.* I could find the opinion of this Learned *Doctour* in several places up and down *Monsieur Claude* his Book, where having laid down to us for a principle, that the power of the Keyes, and that of binding and loosing, only is reposed in the faithful people of God, he draws this Conclusion from it, that private Churches ought to get to themselves such Members as they know to be more particularly the faithful, and to remove from it the worldly persons to whom God hath not affixed that power of binding and loosing, nor committed the menagement of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

I could ascend, as far as *Luther* and *Melancton* to justify the separation, even from Churches that have not any error in their Doctrine. *Luther*, in cap. 4. *Genesios.* *Etiam si præterea nihil peccatum esset in Doctrina Pontificia, justas tamen fuisse causas cur ab Ecclesia Romanâ nos sejungeremus.*

BUT the *Independants* have reasonably outvied *Luther*, and the other Doctors, for they hold though the Church of *Rome* should not have any defects either in Doctrine or Discipline, yet they were not to be condemned for separating from *Rome*, and for being independent on the *Romish* Church and her *Synods*, more then to find fault with the Church of *Sedan*, which is separate from that of *Metz*, in regard of any dependance one upon the others, or upon the *Synods* that were common with them. In a word, it is a thing as natural, and as reasonable, for a Church to divide it self into two other Churches, which may each do their own business, separately, as for one family to be divided into two others, whereof each hath the liberty to govern themselves according to their own way and fancy.

THUS you have in all this discourse, if I am not much mistaken, the Justification of the carriage and government of the Congregational way, and very clear and full proofs of their conformity with the *Ancient Christians*: As also their Confession does evidence that which they have with the *Apostolical*, in a more plain, free, expressive, and incontestable manner than any of the confessions that are collected in the *Corpus*, or *Synagoga Confessionum*

num, so far are they from being the work of persons distracted, and *Enthusiasts*, as some of our Divines have fancied, that you might altogether, with as much reason, put among the productions of Fools and mad men, the three most excellent and consummated pieces according to the Judgment that *Alexander More* has made of them, the Epistle of *Calvin* before his Institutions, that of *Thuanus* before his History, and the Preface of *Casanbon* in his Edition of *Polybius*.

AND WILL, no doubt, be expected that I should add the order which is observed and practised in the Independent Churches to their confession which ought to follow: but as they profess a perfect harmony among themselves: so likewise they do not believe this same absolute necessity, as to that which concerns discipline: for excepting some few *Apostolical*, and perpetual Rules which admit no change according to times and places, concerning the equality of Pastors; that choice that every Church is to make of its Pastor (in which *Monsieur Melitezat* and *Monsieur Claude* make the true ordination to consist) the solemn benediction of that Pastor by fasting and prayers, and the refusal they make of their Ministries and of their Members, which some call Excommunication, and deposition; excepting, I say, these acts, their order is to do all things decently, and in order, in the Church, as *Saint Paul* requires. But they are governed as all other Societies; and as they explain themselves in the first Chapter of their confession of faith, Article VII. in these words. *There are some circumstances in the Government of the Church, and in divine Worship, which are common with all the actions of men, which are practised in all Societies, and which ought to be regulated by natural light, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word of God, which are always to be observed.*

THIS is all the discipline which the Independents practise; their Government is that of well ordered Republicks, that cannot possibly be too exact for the regulating of manners; but which have but very few Lawes for that of Polity: they are far from that Maxim. *in pessimâ republicâ plurimæ leges.*

BUT how wise soever their carriage and government be, how sound and Orthodox their Doctrine, and how exact and scrupulous their lives; yet they cannot escape the tyranny of those little sincere judgements, which the most learned and grave per-

sons have made of them: so that it need be no surprize at all, if the Doctors of *Rome*, how illuminated soever and sincere they have seem'd to be, have had for so many Ages, and have still to this day so great an Aversion for our Religion, how holy soever it is, and have passed judgments so little favourable of it, as to draw, from our Morals, consequences, that are as far from purity and truth, as they are from our intention; This, I say, need be no surprize at all to us, since that *Amyrauld*, *Daillé*, and so many others of their gown have not passed any less sinister judgment of a generation of men as holy as any in the World, I mean, of the *Independants*, no more than of their carriage, government and Doctrine.

AS to their carriage and Government, whether in private, or in the Church, I do not believe there are any better regulated, more Wise, more Prudent, more Illuminated, nor more Religious. As to their Doctrine, their Confession of Faith shall Witness what it is, since that of all those that have appeared in the World of that Nature, it is a peice the most Perfect, Pure, and Orthodox: And in which it may well nigh be said the *Christian* Religion may be found compleat, though there should onely be remaining that single piece in all the Booksellers Shops in the World.

CHAP. X.

Of the Wise and Prudent carriage of the Independants, and of their way to get further off the Church of Rome than any other, and to condemn all the wayes of Reconciliation with it, and the Churches that hold any Communion with Rome, that the indeavour to come near it is damnable and pernicious, as is sufficiently seen in the present posture of the affairs of England.

THOSE, who shall approve of the wise conduct of the Congregational Churches, in the composing of a Confession that hath so much conformity with the purest Churches of *Jesus Christ*, will be easily perswaded that neither Wisdome, nor Prudence have been wanting to them, when with that conformity of Faith, that there is between them and the Churches that are at greatest distance from Popery, they have preserved to themselves their liberty, as to matter of discipline, to do their business a part independantly one on the other, and on all other Authority beside that of *Jesus Christ*, without making use of that way of Reconciliation which hath been practised in all Ages by the means of conferences and Synods, which have rather sharp'ned and exasperated spirits, and perpetuated quarrels, than any ways appeased and hushed them; and whereof all the advantage that can be hoped, is at most to make such an accord, as it may be, dissembles, or disguises, or else suppresses the truth.

THIS is no more than what appeared in the Colloquy of *Poissy*, where the greatest defenders of Transubstantiation, and those who combated and opposed it as a vile Monster of *Rome*, concurred together upon the Article of the real presence in the Eucharist. And this is what appear'd also in the Overture of Reconciliation which was made in the year 1578. in the Synod of *Sainte Foy* with the *Lutherans* by the means of a formulary or president of such a profession

feſſion of Faith as ſhould be general and common with all Churches as they propoſed to draw up: but that Overture could only tend to a Reconciliation as difficult as that of finding a *Medium* between Tranſubſtantiation, and the Opinion of our Churches which is contrary to it. Certainly our Churches were never able to draw back from the purity of our Doctrine, nor from the ſincerity with which they expreſs it without being at the ſame time guilty of great prevarication: And moreover, the *Lutherans* would never have yielded to go off from their ingagement to *Luther*, and his Conſubſtantiation. If both had complied, and met at half way, it would have been a moſt wretched peace, *quæ*, as *Saint Auſtin* ſpeaks, *ſit diſpendio veritatis*.

THE preſent poſture of the Affairs of *England* is a very clear and convincing proof, that the Indeaſon of thoſe Reconcilers, how good ſoever their deſigns were, is ruinous both to Church and State. There has been an attempt for above this laſt Age to get into a Neighbourhood, and Vicinity with *Rome*, thinking to ſweeten the ſpirits and tempers of thoſe of its communion, to draw them over to ours, or at at leaſt to make but one Communion of two. In the beginning of the Reformation there were ſeveral of the Ceremonies retained, and fifty years afterwards others of them were introduced, they have attempted to bring in Images, and ſo to paſs from thence to worſhipping of them. Every where the Altars are new ſet up on purpoſe, no doubt, to make there the Sacrifice of the Maſs to ſmoke; which is apparent by the bowings and cringings to thoſe Altars, or at leaſt to the places where they are ſet, (or as ſome will have it be) to the Eaſt. The Ordination of Romiſh Paſtors is held for good, and for that of the true Church of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and on the other hand, that of the other Reformed Churches, becauſe they were not Episcopalis rendred void and null, and becauſe they had not the mark of the beaſt upon their fore-head, whereat *Monſieur Claude* is extremely offended: Nay, they have gone to that extremity, that one *Henry Dodwell* hath newly publiſhed a large Book, where he labours to prove, and eſtabliſh this maxim, that there where there is no Episcopalis Ordination, there is no true Church, no Miniſter of *Jeſus Chriſt*, no Sacrament, and no Salvation. They have left out thoſe expreſſions that are a ſhock and offence to *Rome*, that the Pope is the Antichriſt, the man of ſin, and the

the Son of Perdition, the Doctors of the Church of England, as *Thornike, Taylor, Bramhal, Patrick, Sherelock, &c.* have sweetned the Doctrines of Rome, to make them rellish and go down the better with the Protestants. In a word, to compleat the design they had to testifie their kindness for Rome, they have persecuted them, most who are got at greatest distance from it. They have made the Image of their persons, and of their devotion to tread the Stage, to render them both odious, and ridiculous. They have loaden them with calumnies, in the same manner as the Pagans of old cloathed the Christians with Bears skins and Lyons skins to stir up the rage of Mastiff Dogs against them; they have treated them with the Appellations of Schismatics and Rebels, who have been concerned deep in the late Conspiracy, a thing that gives one a horror to think of: And the mildness and most gentle treatment is that of Fanatics, Enthusiasts, and Medlars that perpetuate the division between the *English*, and the *Romish* Church, and hinderers of their coming together. To conclude, as *Tacitus* sayes, *proximorum odia sunt acerrima*, their aversion and hatred are so great against the Presbyterian, Puritan, and Independant party, that these words are very frequently in their mouths, and it is their discourse both as they walke along the Streets, and set at their Tables, that they would rather be Papists than Presbyterians. 'Tis then a thing much to be wondred at, that whilest the Prelatical party have so much love and kindness for Rome, and so much aversion for *Calvin*, and our Churches in *France*, as to raise them out of the number of the Churches of *Jesus Christ*, to reject the ordination of their Pastors as Null, and to tear in pieces with calumnies the puritanical party only for this reason, because it hath a veneration for our Churches, and for the Memory of *Calvin*; 'tis, I say, a very suprising thing, and much to be wondred at, that our Pastors in *France*, (at least the greatest part) should make their Court to that Episcopal party, and call those faithful people in *England*, Enthusiasts, Fanatics, and Hypocrites, who separate from the Doctrines, Customs, Practices, and Lives of those that Persecute them. But yet a People, who, by the Purity of their Doctrine, the holyness of their Lives, and their Conformity with *Calvin*, and his Disciples, keep off, and retard the Introduction of Paganisme in *England*, and the Judgements

of God upon the Nation. Certainly it, is a very surprizing thing, that the Fat of the Prelates Kitching, and the lustre of their Hierarchy should so dazle the eyes of our great men in *France*, as to postpone in their esteem, the best, the most holy, and the most numerous Party of the People of *England*, to that which glitters and dazles most, and which now have the uppermost seats in the Synagogues.

BUT that Church which will have all or nothing, shews more heat and vehemency against these Reconcilers, than against those that protest against all Reconciliation with *Rome*: which imitates the Lyon in the Apologue that devoured the Ass for desiring to share with him.

THE Church of *Rome*, which is said to be Infallible, is an immoveable Rock; the Reformed, at least the *English* Church, is a floating Boat upon the Water which is fastened to that Rock by a Rope; now he that thinks to draw it to him, will be much deceived, for he will but pull himself nearer to the Rock. 'Tis true, that neither the whole body of the Clergy of *England*, which set at the helm of Affairs, nor any of them has been concerned in the late attempt upon the life of our most gracious King, but it is true also, that the Papists had never been brought or tempted to think of such a thing, if they had not been strongly perswaded, that the life of the King was the only Impediment, why those, who had already come over three parts of four of the way to *Rome*, had not finished the rest of their Journey to them.

CHAP. XI.

A continuance of the same matter concerning the wise carriage of those Churches that are for their way Congregational, when they condemn all manner of speaking like to Rome, and all practises, that do any whit savour of theirs: and the six Maxims on which the Pope and his Church are founded: a Confirmation of that by a History taken out of the Life of Joseph Hall.

TIS then with good reason that the Independants condemn all the Overtures of Peace and Reconciliation, and believe that they have been attempted in vain from time to time between the Catholics, and the Arrians; the Greeks, and the Latins; the Protestants and the Papists; the Lutherans, and the Calvinists, the Episcopal, and the Presbyterians; and these from the Congregational men: they condemn, I say, all these Overtures of Peace and Reconciliation, unless the two parties that are both under Error, and that are both at an equal distance from the truth, be reduced to a Medium that may bring them to some Establishment: without this, they are very much perswaded that to compose all the differences which are in matters of Religion, there is no other method than theirs, which is that every Christian makes himself of that Assembly which is according to his Opinion; and that the Church of which he is a Member do not persecute those who are otherwise perswaded.

THEY are not then led by any extravagancy of Reason, when they put among the *Ideas* of Plato these six maxims, with which the World is so strongly possess'd.

1. THAT a Civil State ought to tolerate but one Religion.

2. THAT all the Churches collected in that State ought to associate and joyn themselves into one body, which may be of the same extent as the Civil State.

3. THAT

3. THAT that body Ecclesiastical is distinct in Jurisdiction, and Independent on that of the Republick, and that there ought to be no appeal from Consistories, and Synods to the Magistrare.

4. THAT this Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction is exercised by vertue of a *divine right* positive and perpetual, and by the power of the Keys, and of that of binding and loosing given by *Jesus Christ*, either to the Church, or to its Pastors.

5. THAT the Churches ought to be all united by the same bond of Faith and Discipline under the same Ecclesiastical Governours, and to be obedient to their Laws, their Commands and their Censures,

6. THAT to compass this Union, every party of different persuasion and Judgement, in matters of Faith, and Discipline ought to abate something of their rigour, and their right, and come one part of the way to a Reconciliation: that is to say, that every party ought to recover an invidious peace, to abandon the truth he believes he has on his side, or to enervate the force of it.

THESE maxims, which are those of *Rome*, have been and will be the cause why there will never be in the World, neither Church, nor Reformation without some mixture of corruption. The Felicity of being freed from these, is only to be found in the Independent Church.

ABOVE all, they find the 5th. maxim to be unreasonable, wicked, and tyrannical, principally when they press to an Uniformity of Discipline, all the Inhabitants of a Territory or Kingdom, under one and the same Sovereign, about which both the greatest number of people, and the most illuminated are divided, and do not find one clear, constant, and perpetual truth, in the Sacred Scriptures to press the Uniformity of it, nor the necessity of that way that they find as to what concerns Faith. *Theodosius the II.* had his reason better grounded, when he commanded all his Subjects to believe according to the Faith of *Damasus* of *Rome*, and *Peter* of *Alexandria*, then if he had commanded them an Uniformity in Discipline, which he did not do, and which he could not execute: For he could not be ignorant that as there was but one Faith, to which every faithful soul ought to adhere, and to be verily perswaded that his was the true, it was not without reason that he rather commanded the belief of that Faith, than the practise

of

of a discipline, since that the one was expressly laid down in the holy Scripture, and the other was not.

TIS after this manner the Independant Churches argue. They believe, with *Theodosius*, that the Subjects of an Empire are obliged to embrace the same Faith, supposing it be that of *Jesus Christ*, but they are not obliged to practise one certain discipline, which is not found in the holy Scripture.

THE first maxim was that of *Dioclesian*, who alone did shed more Christian blood than his Predecessors all together had done. It cannot be practised without Fire and Sword, and it is as full of Impiery and of Paganism as Excommunication. *Titus Livius lib. 39. tit. 9* puts among the Roman Laws, *Ne qui Romani Dei, neque alio more quam patrio colerentur: & ne quis in publico sacrove loco novo aut externo ritu sacrificaret.* The *Scythians* caused *Anacharsis* to be put to death for having a Worship a part, which he had learnt in Greece. And *Mecenas* exhorted *Augustus* to punish those who would not conform themselves to the Religion of the Countrey. *Dio. lib. 52* Τὸ μὲν θεῶν πᾶσι πάντως αὐτὸς το σέβει ὃ τὸς ἄλλος τιμᾶν ἀνάγκη ἐστι.

BUT yet this maxim was not so much practised when the Government was more popular, and when Altars were erected to strange Gods, and to some unknown: for, after they had subdued Nations, they also brought their Gods in triumph.

I met with the Defeat and overthrow of the fifth maxim, in a discourse at the beginning of a Treatise of that excellent Knight, to whom I Dedicated my *Fasciculus*, as an Answer to some questions that were put to him, by thoughts much agreeing with mine, before ever we had any communication of them together; which he also confirms by those of a Learned Divine, whose name is *Chillingworth*, and whose Authority is so much the more considerable, and weighty, as being a Church of *England* man. There are, say they, but two wayes to make all Christians to enter into one and the same communion; either in taking away the diversity of Opinions that divide them, which is impossible without a Miracle and unless God had established and set up a visible Judge to whom their differences should be referred; or else being all perswaded that this diversity of Opinions ought not to hinder their communion, and their Union, in things wherein they do agree, and where charity, complaisance and condescension ought to have place, without any ones being deprived of their Opinions.

nion, or that one should persecute the other that differs from his.

DOCTOR *Jeremy Taylor*, who was a strong man for the English Hierarchy, by reason whereof he was made a Bishop in *Ireland*, and who was extraordinarily illuminated and Learned, agreed in the same Sentiment with Dr. *Chillingworth*, and hath published a great Book; whose Title is, *the Liberty of Prophecy* against the wicked and unreasonable carriage of those who rigorously impose set Forms of Faith to others, and who Persecute and ill-use those who are not of their Opinion in matters of Religion.

ALSO the Independants have indeavoured not so much to establish the goodness of the Congregational way in sound clear minds, because they are soon convinced of it by the description they make of it, as to disabuse them of those maxims which are but so many illusions, though most commonly it is easier to refute Errors, than to establish Truths; as *Cicero* very well says. *Utinam tam facile possem vera probare, quam falsa convincere.*

NOW the tyranny of these maxims, which are as much that of the Protestants as of the Papists, is the cause why the transition of the Romish Religion to the reformed is but imperfectly done in *France*, *Germany*, *England*, and elsewhere, how little complaisance soever we have had for *Rome*, and for an affinity with her, it has cost us very dear: we have thought we ought not to go from one extremity to another at one leap. As we fell from the Impatation to Transubstantiation so likewise have we gone from Transubstantiation, to Consubstantiation its Neighbour; then we have retained the real presence in the Sacramental Supper, which has some agreement; and is conciliable with those three illusions of words. 'Tis said indeed, that this presence was spiritual, but at the same time it was clothed with the flesh, when they kept at the beginning of the reformation such wayes of expressing themselves which have been a great Shock to *Bullinger*, and many other great men of his time: *That we were nourished in this Sacrament with the substance of the flesh, and with the blood of Jesus Christ.* Which has given occasion to the Bishop of *Condom*, to *Monsieur Arnauld*, and to Father *Maimbourg* to put this Interrogatory to us, *if you speak as we do, why do you not believe as we do?* Especially the Bishop of *Condom* has made use of it, and they have given him reason to triumph over us as much in

in that, as he hath done as to the eminent Authority that is established in our Churches with as much incontestability as if it were Infallible. The Missionary *Peau* sayes, that it is a Gallimaufrey of the Protestants to speak of being nourished with the substance of *Jesus Christ*, and with his flesh, and not to believe Transubstantiation. A Learned English Dr. named *John Hales* hath written a Learned Treatise upon this Subject, where he condemns this way of Reconciliation that sayes one thing, and believes another, and that turns again to *Rome*, and he exhorts his Brethren to condemn rather the use of it than to justify it: He sayes also that *Martyn Bucer* was the first of the Reformed that made use of this way of speaking.

IT must be confessed, that as the weakness of those great lights of Reformation *Bucer*, *Calvin*, and *Beza*, was very great, when they explained those Scriptures concerning the Lords Supper, by a Comment that was more obscure than the Text, nor hath it been less great in those that have come after them, when they have explained the words of *Jesus Christ* in *S. John VI.* concerning the fleshly eating, to the Sacramental and Spiritual eating, and when they have made long comments upon the words of *Calvin* to sweeten and smoothe the harshness of them, instead of condemning them: this obstinacy in adhering to errors, hath brought in the pretended infallibility into the Church of *Rome*, and the Incontestability into the Reformed Churches. *Inter cetera mortalitatis incommoda hoc est, errandi necessitas, & erroris amor. Seneca.*

NOW these ways of speaking which symbolize with those of *Rome*, and which give it occasion to insult, and triumph over us, makes me remember what I have read in the Memoirs and specialties that *Joseph Hall* hath made of his Life, and absolutely convinces me of this truth, that it has been so unlikely that they, who have believed they might gain upon *Rome*, by retaining some of their ways and modes of speaking, or their practices, should have succeeded therein, that on the contrary She has been so much the more set and hardened against us, and have gone so far in it, as to make us, and their Religion far more reasonable than ours. He sayes, that in his journey to the *Spadan* Waters for his health, he had before a great company of persons of quality, both Papists and Protestants, a very hot dispute with a Sorbonist, a Prior of the *Carmelites*, who maintained that the Kneeling

practised in the Church of *England*, at the receiving of the Eucharist, strongly shewed that she believed Transubstantiation; for that kneeling and the belief of Transubstantiation were things inseparable, and always went hand in hand together; and since the one had never been believed in the Church without the practise of the other; and since it was a distraction of reason, and a wicked practise to carry their adorations to Elements that were only Bread and Wine, this kneeling of necessity must be a natural consequence of the belief of Transubstantiation: Bishop *Hall* adds, that as the company was divided in their judgments and that several of them joyned with those of *Rome*, in condemning this kneeling, unless it was a consequence of Transubstantiation, more than two thirds of the company were so heated against the poor Bishop, that he had not the liberty to speak, nor to stand up in defence of the Church's Opinion: For if they had given him time to speak, he had alleadged the Rubrick of the Church of *England*; which undeceives the Communicants from the thoughts that they might possibly have that that Kneeling or Adoration is carried out to the Bread and the Wine: But beside, that there is not of a hundred Communicants one who reads the Rubrick, it might have happened that those who were so violent against Bishop *Hall*, would have pleasantly stopt his mouth with the Apologue which *Beza* writ in a Letter to the good Archbishop *Edmund Grindal*, who seeing that he was offended at this kneeling, after Transubstantiation was banished, endeavoured to cure him of the scandal he had taken, making him to know that the Rubrick of the Church of *England*, would give him enough wherewith to be satisfied: Upon which *Beza* returned him this story. A Lord having built his house near to the high way, where he left a great stone that he had no occasion for just in the road, several persons coming by in the night stumbled at it, and did hurt themselves, and often complaints being made to him about it, and intreaties that he would take it out of the way, he was very obstinate a long while, and was resolved not to meddle with it; but being wearied by the continual solicitations that were made to him, he bethought himself to set over the stone a Lanthorn with a light Candle in it, to warn people of it; but that Admonition proving troublesome too, one of his friends came and gave him this good Counsel; Sir, if you would be at quiet, take away

way both stone and Lanthorn together. The stone of stumbling is this kneeling at the Sacrament, and the Rubrick is for a light and Declaration, to signifie to the Communicants, that this kneeling is not done to the bread and wine, but to *Jesus Christ*. If you take away both, you will take away the scandal, and the remedy to the scandall: You will bring back the way with which *Jesus Christ* instituted the holy Supper, who gave it not kneeling, but in the posture of those who take their ordinary repasts at their Tables, so that *Jesus Christ* never required any Genuflexion either at the time or place.

THESE two stories hit (as we generally say) two birds with one stone. For they may relate to that neerfulness of affinity with *Rome*, which I have already spoken of above, and which I have showed has rather sharpened and embittered the Spirits and tempers of those of that communion, to plot against the sacred person of the KING, and against his Government, than it has any wayes sweetned them: and moreover, they discover that those who go furthest off from the Doctrines and practises of *Rome*, who renounce all reconciliation with Her, as the people of the Congregational way do, have most conformity with the blessed peace-Makers of whom *Jesus Christ* speakes, and whereof the Character of the Children of God which he gives them upon this respect, carryes them so much the farther from all thoughts of Rebellion.

CHAP. XII.

An Apology for the Author of the Conformity of the congregational Churches with that of the Antient Primitive Christians: That a disinterested person, such as he, is the most fit to write about these matters. Of the Obligation he hath to the Bishop of Condom for the light he hath given him.

I Think my self here obliged to add an Apology as to my own account, for what I have said as to the Independant Churches. I do imagine I shall be accused at first for having made the description

tion of the congregational way, not according as it is in effect, but in that manner as *Xenophon* did the *Cyropædia* to be the perfect model of a Prince. They will say that any other interest than that of the inward knowledge I have of the goodness, truth and holiness of the Congregational way, ought to have excited me to commend it so as I have done. That I commend what I do not approve in the bottom of my heart, since I do not joyn my self to it. They will say likewise that I have had no other design than to gain my own Sentiments credit, with which they say I am most fondly in Love, in adjusting them to those of the Independants; and because I condemn Ecclesiastical power, and Excommunication, which I have undertook to possess the World with the belief of, that so they should banish the use of it. To which, I answer, that though I should joyn my self to their Assemblies, it would be no argument that I should approve of all the things they did, and all they believed, as they cannot conclude by my not joyning to their Congregations, that I have not the Congregational way in greater and higher esteem than any other. As I am a *Frenchman*, and by the grace of God of the reformed Church, I joyn to the Church of my own Nation, to which I am so much the more strongly invited by the holiness of the Doctrines, and lives of our excellent Pastors, *Monsieur Mussard*, and *Monsieur Primrose*; and because they administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the same manner as *Jesus Christ* did it with his Disciples; not having any thing to give me offence in their conduct, unless that they are not absolutely undeceived of the practise of our Pastors in France, of excommunicating in the Name and Authority of *Jesus Christ*, and of interposing the same sacred Name, and the same sacred Authority to excommunicate as *St. Paul* made use of to deliver the *Incestuous* person over to *Satan*; though they cannot find this Authority of excommunicating in all the Bible, nor justify it, unless they elude that harshness of expression by this way of sweetning, that their only intention is to declare that those sinners of whom they make the number, take the Lord's Supper to their Condemnation, if they do not repent beforehand.

AS for other accusations, although I believe that of all Establishments of Religion, that of the Independant Churches is the most Apostolical; yet I do not believe it is infallible, and I cannot approve of all

all they say, nor all they practise concerning discipline nor concerning the use of the Ecclesiastical power, and excommunication; though this usage be not in all the same, nor in all the Churches; because some among them do retain it *jure societatis, & vi, & virtute patris & federis eniti*. However it is, both of them make use of Ecclesiastical power and excommunication very innocently, for they do not set up a National Tribunal, Independent on the Magistrate, and they Attribute to their Synods no other Authority, than that of perswasion, both from wise and experienced persons. Moreover, from the manner that they express themselves in the VII. Article of the first Chapter of their Confession of Faith, one may conclude, that beside the Jurisdiction which works upon hearts by the word, they acknowledge no other than that which is taken by a natural right, and that wisdom and prudence has not been wanting to them, by their having in a joynt consent agreed in one and the same Doctrine, because it is of divine and perpetual right, but in not having established any thing determinatively to be a perpetual rule upon an Arbitrary and changeable matter, and of humane right, as is the discipline of the Churches, and the Authority of the Pastors in their conduct and government.

BUT although they should have retained some usage of the Ecclesiastical power and excommunication, which are so many Reliques of *Rome* that have accomplished the Mystery of iniquity, and brought the Pope into the world, they would be no less priviledged than *St. Paul*, and the other Apostles, who, after they had received the holy Ghost in greater measure than all the holy men that had been before them, yet they alwayes retained some leaven of affection to the Mosaical Ceremonies. If the Christians that came from Paganisme, have alwayes kept some pollution of it, it ought not to be any great surprize to see the purest Churches in the World, yet not thoroughly cleansed from all the Impurities of *Rome*.

FOR these considerations, I feed my self with the hopes that the Ministers of the Independent Churches, who are too much illuminated long to remain in the belief and use of this illusion of Ecclesiastical power, which hath brought Episcopacy, that is the first step of Ascention to the papacy, and after that Excommunication and Infallibility; and that they would put in practise instead of excommunication, that denuntiation which

S. Paul

S. Paul recommended to his Disciple and son *Timothy*, it is that in case any disorderly, or wicked person of the Congregation, cannot be perswaded to change his opinion, and life, and voluntarily to leave the Communion of the Church, it should be published aloud in the face of the Church, and the faithful should be exhorted to shun his company: and in case that he persevere in such refractoriness, he ought to be expelled by force, as well from the Table of the Lord, as from the Church. And this is what may be practised by a natural right, & *de jure Societatis* without any need of making such expulsion of credit by the Keys of the Kingdome of Heaven, and by the power of binding and loosing. In short, I hope they will be perswaded by this consideration that the benefit which comes by the Ecclesiastical power and Excommunication will never recompence the pernicious effects that they have produced.

NOW I believe that these three considerations, that I am a *Physician*, that I am a *Frenchman*, and that I do not *joyn* to anyone certain *Congregational Assembly* as a Member of it, will give more Authority and credit to the relation I have made of their government and conduct, and make it less suspected, than if I were of their Number, of their Nation, and 'a Divine by Profession: For if I were qualified in three wayes, I could not speak as a person disinterested, but as having a personal inclination to the way I should have espoused: And that is the weakness of all those who plead for their own cause, as we learn from *S. Austin*, and *Optatus Milevitanus*, who were of this opinion, that a sincere Pagan or Heathen, whether a Physitian, a Sophister, a Philosopher, or belonging to the Magistracy, were more competent Judges in matters of Divinity, and differences among Christians, than persons of the Priesthood, and Sacerdotal function.

A *S. S. Paul* could not elect a more disinterested person to gain the Christian Religion credit, in the minds of men, and to write his Gospel, as he calls it, and the Acts of the Apostles, than *S. Luke* the Physitian, to whom the world is more obliged than to a thousand *S. Chrysostomes*, and *S. Austins*, and to all the persons of the Sacred Order, without so much as excepting the very Apostles themselves: I believe that the same Judgment ought to be made of me, and that my quality of a Physitian ought to give stronger impressions of the goodness of the
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Congregational way in the minds of men, than would that of a Divine, of a Minister of the Gospel, or any other person ingaged by profession either to the Episcopal, Presbyterian, or even to the Congregational way. As Reason and Grace in the hopes of glory are the three Ressorts or principles which have alwayes moved and governed me in all the course of my life, and in all my Writings: so have they been always less violent by the prejudices and interelts in the profession I make of a Physician, than if I had been either a Divine, or a Lawyer.

I ought here also to acknowledg my Obligation to the Bishop of Condom; not only for the first hints of this truth; *that the Congregational way is of all the Establishments of Discipline and Government the most conformable to reason, to the holy Scripture, and to the practise of the Apostles, and the Primitive Christians*: but for having absolutely confirmed me in this truth: though the design of that Bishop has not been to put the *Congregational way* above the *Romish*; but only to discover, (and this he hath done by Arguments that come very near to demonstration) that going upon the hypothesis of the necessity of setting up a Tribunal in the Church; and of the submission of the people to that Tribunal, as being the only Rampart of the Orthodox Faith, and the only means of Uniting Christians, preserving peace and good order among them; it is incomparably more reasonable that such submission should be made to an infallible Tribunal, than to One that is subject to Error; and that upon this ground, of all the Ecclesiastical ways in the World which acknowledg that every Ecclesiastical Tribunal, either supreme, or subordinate, that every Council, either Oecumenical, or Topical, is fallible and subject to error, the Congregational way which refuses all manner of submission to a Tribunal subject to error is the most reasonable and the most just.

CHAP. XIII.

The Explication of one difficulty which runs throughout the whole precedent discourse.

AS it was in my thoughts to finish this discourse by the word *Finis*, a Learned Presbyterian coming in, and having apprehended my design, put one objection to me against the defeat and overthrow I pretend to make of the necessity of a Tribunal in the Church; he said that since that Tribunal which requires the people to submit themselves to it is as much set up in an independent Church, as in a National, and since both presuppose that that Tribunal is subject to error, the submission of the people is altogether as reasonable to the Tribunal of a National Church, as to that of a Congregational, I confess there is some weight in this objection, which *Monsieur Jurieu* has not thought of, but which nevertheless is easy to be answered according to the principles I lay down.

1. **T**HAT all manner of Government, Presbyterian, Congregational, National, Episcopal, Hierarchical, Papal, is of the same nature with that of the Magistrate.

2. **T**HAT the submission required, and given to all manner of Ecclesiastical Government is of the same nature with that which is required and given to a Civil and Political government, the Respects of which are not the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, nor the power of binding and loosing, but the will of the strongest, and most numerous that hath so ordain'd it.

3. **A**ND consequently that the Censures of excommunication and deposition, being of the same nature with the Law of the Magistrate, the validity of which is not in the Justice, nor equity of the thing, but in the will of those that decree and ordain it, they ought to be accounted as a Civil punishment.

THES E three considerations destroy that erection of an Ecclesiastical Tribunal, which is equal with the Civil in one and the same Territory, since both being of the same nature, it would be a pure piece of Gallimaufrey and hotchpot to offer to establish.

bliss two Civil Governments in one and the same dominion or Territory, which should be independant one on the other.

ALSO this difficulty is easie to be overcome according to the principles of the Independants. The Inconvenience of an Excommunicated or deposed person unjustly by his Congregation is not great, so long as it does not extend beyond his Jurisdiction, and that of a hundred Congregations in one Territory, it is impossible but that at least there might be one to recompence the Justice of his cause; which is not a thing feasible, if he be struck by a National Judgment, unless he leaves his Country. And since the person oppressed is in the liberty of framing to himself a Congregation Independant on all the Churches of the world, though it be but of seven or eight persons, his innocence and legitimate right will easily furnish him with the means to do it. I add further, that a person who is sensible he is guilty of disorders, can easily conceal them in the crowd of a National Church, (which he cannot so well do in a small number of persons,) and commonly prevent the Censure of his Congregation, and not expect that they should excommunicate him and drive him out of it; which is done in that manner as *St. Jerome*, and *Bishop Godeau*, would have the Heretick, (of whom *S. Paul* speaks in the 3. of *Timas. 11.* knowing that he that is such, (i.e. an Heretick) is *subverted and snareth, being condemned of himself.*) To do, when he excommunicated himself; and saved his Church that trouble.

IT must not be forgot that tho there is no Government so perfect wherein one cannot find some faults, and some Inconvenience, yet it is certain there is found less in the Congregational way, whereas you may find almost an infinity in that of the National, whereof a thousand persons that deserve the censure of the Church, there is not one of them that undergoes it; because its discipline is like to spiders Webs, where the Fly's are taken, but the Birds pass through; and where it is impossible in a Town or a Church of many thousands of Christians, that one Bishop or Pastor can possibly have an exact inspection over them: whereas in a Congregational Church composed but of a few persons, and those all call'd out of the multitude who run after Vanities and Vices, one has but little or no use of excommunication and deposition, and where Avarice, Ambition, Heresies, and quarrels do not enter as in National Churches.

THESE considerations give me to hope that the learned and illuminated of the Congregational way will agree and joyn with my principles or Hypotheses, to establish the true nature of their Jurisdiction, and to undo with ease the difficulty of the objection: although according to their principles it resembles the Foils, which touch the person, but do not wound it: For in case of a wound, they have a thousand remedies to heal it presently; whereas there is no remedy either against Infallibility in the Church of Rome, or against incontestability in a National Church.

CHAP. XIV.

Remarks upon the Fault that some may find in the Title of this discourse.

I Will finish these considerations by the discussion and explication of the Title of this discourse, to which some have excepted, because they find there is not one Ecclesiastical Government, even of those which differ most from one another, that do not pretend to this Conformity, as indeed they have either more or less: for there is not one of them, no not even of those that are the farthest off from the Doctrines and Government of the Ancient Christians, and that have but very little agreement one with the other, there is not one, I say, but what hath in something a conformity with them. Every way of Government boasts of their retaining this conformity with the Ancient Christians: I my self pretend to this glory in favour of the Congregational way. Not long since a Learned Minister of Rouen published a Book intituled, the *Conformity of the discipline of the Churches of France to that of the Ancient Christians*: Betide, though the discipline of the Church of England hath not any agreement with that of the Churches of France; and it is impossible that two disciplines so disagreeing to each other, should have both of them much conformity to the discipline of the Ancient Christians yet it hath so happened that a Famous Divine

vine, in his preface to his English Translation of the *Novalty of Popery*, maintains very zealously the same thing in favour of the Discipline of the Church of *England*, as *Monsieur Larroque* has done in favour of those of *France*. If I were, sayes he, to speak to Frenchmen, I would endeavour to convince them fully, that we retain in *England* more of the Primitive and Apostolick Government than all the other Churches in the world. Dr. *Floyd*, and Dr. *Tillotson* say the same thing. But I believe that this conformity is much what like to that which is between *Jesus Christ*, and *St. Francis*. For I do openly maintain that of all the Establishments of Religion, That of the Church of *England* is widest from the discipline and practise of the Ancient Christians. But he is not the only person hath spoke after this manner, *England* is full of Books upon the subject of the Conformity of its Hierarchy, and of its Episcopal Government to that of the Ancient Christians. The Bishops *Bilson*, *Andrews*, *Hall*, *Morton*, and *Pearson*, find it in *Clement Romanus*, and in *Ignatius*; some of the Doctors of *Rome*, meet with it in *Denis the Areopagite*: but unless this Conformity be restrained to the times of the Apostles, to which I find more footsteps in the Congregational way, than in any other, I believe we are all in an error as to what concerns our conformity to the Doctrine, Discipline and Life of the Ancient Christians. Above all, the disagreement is found in the life, which was heretofore much more exact and exemplary, than in these last times it is; the Devotion of our days is but cold and languishing in comparison of theirs. It was in that, that their glory did consist, whereas ours is in having a greater knowledg, and a more full and ample illumination into the mysteries of Faith, than the first Christians had; also to be better versed at this day in the knowledg of the Apostolical conduct, of the nature and Government of the Church, of its Authority; and of that of its Pastors, who were the Christians that immediately succeeded the Apostles:

I will finish where I began; and that shall be by the force of those prejudices, wherewith all Christians, as well Protestants as Papists are anticipated and prepossessed, when they generally imagine that the Primitive Church was more Orthodox, and pure in Doctrine, than that of the following Ages, because of their

ncarness with the times of the Apostles: but I am as much perswaded of the contrary, as of any thing in the world. 'Tis said that God never built a Temple, near to which the enemy of our Salvation has not built a Chappel, but than it was a Chappel both greater and more spacious than the temple it self: For during the time whilst God built a little Temple wherein he had circumscribed the twelve Apostles, and a small flock of faithful people who conformed themselves to the purity their Doctrine, and the holiness of their lives, a number incomparably greater of false Apostles, false Doctors and false Brethren, separated from them. For even in the first three hundred years of Christianity, all or the most part of sincere persons, and also of Fathers, had a great deal of false alloy mixt among their gold. This is what we learn from *Eutychius*, who lived in the first Ages of Christianity, from whom we have the History of the Church in *Arabyck* published by Mr. *Selden*, and Mr. *Pocock*, and whom they recommend for an Author of an irreproachable fidelity. There he tells us, that *Constantine* the Great sent to all the Churches of his Empire Letters to let them understand that they were to make choice of the most Religious Bishops, and those that were most learned in the Mysteries of the Christian Faith; and that they then immediately set themselves to obey the Orders of the Emperour, and that two thousand and forty eight Bishops came to the Town of *Nice*, whereof near two thousand, how pious and sincere soever otherwise they were, were either most ignorant, or most erroneous in the knowledge of the Christian Religion. For they were either *Manichees*, or *Marcionites*, or *Montanists*, or *Valentinians*, or *Samosatenians*, or *Arrians*; and in that great number of Bishops, there were but three hundred and eighteen who had an affection for, and engaged themselves to, the Orthodox Faith, which was that of *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*.

THIS Relation according to *Eutychius* is much more probable than after that manner as it is reported by *Eusebius*, by *Socrates*, by *Baronius*, and by *Monsieur Claude*: For what likelihood is there that that number of Bishops convoked from all places of *Europe* a great part of *Africa*, and also of *Asia*, *Phenicia*, *Greece*, *Macedonia*, *Thessalia*, *Palestine*, *Arabia*, *Pamphilia*, *Syria*, *Capadocia*, *Thrace*, *Cilicia*, *Pontus*, *Persia*, and *Scythia*, should

should amount but to three hundred and eighteen Bishops? There is also less likelihood that those three hundred and eighteen Bishops should appear so sharp and so divided among themselves, as to put out Libels of accusation one against another, and that during their Session, they made a cruel War within themselves. These Accusations might be true as to the other Bishops, who were as much divided in affections, as in judgments, but not of these three hundred and eighteen, who, because they were all Orthodox, and Children of peace, and well united in their affections, such as were *Alexander, Spiridion, and Paphnutius*, were chosen by *Constantine*, and *Alexander* out of the multitude of Hereticks, Factionous, and contentious persons. Beside, the unanimity of these three hundred and eighteen Bishops in the composing of the Faith of the Council, having but four Bishops that refused subscribing to it, plainly shews that their spirit was not that of contention nor animosity one against another, but of peace and concord.

IF the Book of that excellent Author *Eutychius* the Patriarch of *Alexandria* had appeared with all its Truths, and had been seen by all those that had eyes and would use them, during the lives of *Monsieur Salmasius, Monsieur Blundel, &c.* they had been yet more strongly persuaded than they were, that all those circumstances so distant from the relation that *Eutychius* makes of them, favours as much of Romance, as those three Crosses, which *Helena*, Mother of *Constantine*, found, or as the donation of that Emperour to *Silvester*.

CERTAINLY the providence of God did clearly appear in the choise of those three hundred and eighteen Bishops. 'Twas an Act of God, and not man, when he raised up the good Bishop of *Alexandria* to recommend them to *Constantine*, and when he inclined the heart of that Prince to hearken to his Counsel. For if the Emperour had let himself been overruled at the beginning of that Counsel by any other Bishop, as he did at the end of his Life, the first Establishment of Faith and Religion, had been that of *Arrianisme*; whereas the orthodox Faith taking the first possession, under the first Christian Emperour, this served most powerfully to gain it credit, and to make it pass, and transmit it to posterity.

I would ask here by the way those that deprive the Sovereign

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Magistrate of the Intendance, of regulating by a Sovereign Authority in all places, either of an Empire, or a Territory, the matters of Religion, and give him no other Authority than that of a private person, I would ask those, I say, what expedient a good Bilhop, such as this of *Alexandria* could be able to find out to authorize the Faith that was contrary to that of *Arrius*, in case God had not inclined the heart of *Constantine* to establish it by his commands in all the places of his Empire?

I ought not to forget here one circumstance in our Author that extremely fortifies the right of the Magistrate, especially if he be Orthodox, to the Sovereign Intendance in the Government of the Church, and which moreover strongly proves that the Rules, Canons, Censures, and Anathemas of Councils, are only Councils, and the declarations of wise and experienced men, before the Magistrate hath given them Authority by his Sanction. In short, this passage of *Enyebius* is the accomplishment of the prophesie of S. Paul, 1 Cor. 6. 2. *Know you not that the Saints shall judge the World?* that is to say, know you not that God will one day establish Faithful Magistrates, who shall be governours in Chief of the Church; he says than that the choice of three hundred and eighteen Bishops being made, *Constantine* entred into their Assembly, and after he had saluted and harranged to them, he laid his Scepter upon the Table, his Ring, and his sword and said to them, I give you the power of regulating the affairs of the Church; that done, the Fathers humbly thanked him for the Authority which he was pleased to fortifie them with, and rendred him his Scepter, his Ring, and his Sword.

'TIS true, if *Constantine* had been an *Arrian*, his erroneous opinion had done as much mischief, as the contrary opinion to that of *Arrius*, and wherewith he was possessed, did good by its Establishment: but it is true also, that if the Sovereign of an Empire hath no other authority in the Church than that of a private person, it will never be possible, and it can never happen, that an Orthodox Prince will be able to establish the true Religion by his Commandments in all the places of his Empire. 'Tis true, by this Sovereign Authority of the Magistrate, Error and Impiety may as well be established by Lawes, as truth and piety: but it is true also, that when the Sovereign Magistrate, either

either hath no part, nor is interess'd in the affairs of Religion, as during the three first Ages of the Church, nothing could keep the Bishops, as were those two thousand and forty eight of whom *Entychius* speaks, from dividing into many erroneous parties, and the Orthodox party to be always the least in number, and this cannot happen, when God gives to the Church, such Princes as resemble *Constantine the Great*, *Theodosius*, and *Martian*.

IT happens notwithstanding that during such disorders, and such confusions of diverse opinions, as were those of the two thousand and forty, that God reserves always a small number of good Pastors, as were those three hundred and eighteen, who form in a great Empire, such as was the *Roman*, several little Congregations, all like to those of our Independants, whom God makes use of, amidst the greater corruption and confusion, to keep and perpetuate to himself an Orthodox and faithful people in the world.

IT IS true then, that whither God gives a Christian Magistrate, but a Heretick; or whether he does not give any, if he be not possibly a Heathen, as during the three first Ages, the inconvenience is great; but it is otherwise certain, that when God blesses his Church with a Magistrate that favours the Orthodox and true Worshippers of *Jesus Christ*, the condition of the Church of God is incomparably more happy, than under any other establishment of Religion or of the State. For although persecution ought to unite Christians by a holy, and the same Faith, and by a life correspondent to it, yet it hath not that Efficacy nor that vertue to produce those two good effects which commonly follow under the Reign of good Princes, as *David*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*, *Constantine*, *Theodosius*, &c. under whom the people are united well otherwise, and kept in good order, and in the profession of one and the same, and a good Religion, which they are not under persecution. For even the Church is not without disorders, and violent shakings under the best and most Orthodox Princes, which happens by their Indulgence, who keep not up that Authority they ought to take in the government of the Church, and who delegate it to the Clergy, and permit them to exercise by a pretended power derived from *Jesus Christ*, Independant on the Magistrate, and who, in short, raise up Bishops

shops to such a greatness and wealth, as to have credit enough to partake and share the Sovereignty, and to dispute the moiety of it with him, who of right is the Sovereign of the whole, leaving him the temporal Sovereignty, and reserving to themselves the spiritual as they call it.

BUT these matters I discourse of in my Book, not yet Printed, intituled, *An Essay towards a true Ecclesiastical History*. One *Theophilus* of *Alexandria*, and his Successor *Cyrillus*, were equal, and went check by jole in Authority with the Emperour, and had built an Empire in that of their Sovereign. For even those and their Successours had built several of them, when a Pope was set up among them, who subjugated them all, and made them all agree, to set up but one Catholick Church; for before there were in the same Empire many Catholick Churches which mutually destroyed each other. *Donatus* acknowledged no other Church in the World than his own: That made *Theophilus* also of *Alexandria* do so, who persecuted *St. Chrysostome* to the uttermost, and who treated him as an Heretick, a Schismatick, and calling all those that adhered to him, *Johannites*. The same may be said of the concurrence of *Meletius*, of *Flavian*, and *Paulinus*, for the Bishoprick of *Antioch*, who shared the Empire and the Church into two Catholick Churches.

I leave sincere persons to Judge, what integrity of Faith those Prelates could preserve during not only the three first Ages, but also those following.

ALL the Christian Antiquity, put aside that of the Holy Scripture, cannot produce such peices that may come in competition with the Institutions of *Calvin*, or with the confession of the Congregational Faith; the first Centuries of the Christian Church swarmed with Heresie and Hereticks; The most Orthodox as *Irenaeus*, *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Clement*, *Denis* of *Alexandria*, *Origen*, *Cyprian*, *Eusebius*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, &c. who opposed those heresies, were not themselves exempt, and they had all some touch or other of one of the Heresies of *Montanus*, of *Sabellius*, *Samerzites*, *Pelagius*, *Apollinaris*, and *Eutiches*. *St. Austin*, that Miracle of Nature and of Grace, had also his Errors. However he was the first that well established the Doctrine of free Grace; for those who preceded him, have spoke

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of it most an end, as *Pelagius* has done, without any ones taking particular heed to it, or opposing it, because they never treated of that matter thoroughly, and searched into the bottom of it, and have not made any express and particular book about it: this is what *St. Austin* says. *In lib. 1. in Julianum, cap. 2. tali questione nullus Pulsabatur, pelagianis nondum ligantibus securius loquebantur.* They have all consecrated their Errors to Immortality, because of their Ancientness; but as *Cyprian* tells us, *dist. 8. c. 8. Consuetudo sine veritate est Vetus erroris.*

IT appears than by all I have here said, that if Interest, Custome, Obstinacy, the love that every one has for their own particular Opinions, govern the greatest part of Mankind in matters of Religion; we may say of prejudices, that those are they which tyrannize over them; such as in our dayes is that of every sort of the reformed, who imagine that their reformation, their Doctrine, and their Discipline, come the nearest to the Primitive Church. This is what *Monsieur Claude* maintains most confidently of our reformation in *France*: But as I agree with him, that it is the purest in the World, I do not agree with him that it hath any conformity with the Ancient Primitive Church, except he means the Apostolical, and not that which was immediately after the Apostles. For even so the conformity of the Congregational way with the Christians after the Apostles is not as to the Doctrine, but only as to the outward discipline and way of Government.

F I N I S.

THe Reader is desired to take notice, that the Author for some reasons, since the Printing of the Contents, hath thought good to leave out the last Chapter there mentioned.

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